

# **Hyper-Citizenship and the Experience of Youth in the Edwardian Scouting Movement**

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## **Abstract**

### **Hyper-Citizenship and the Experience of Youth in the Edwardian Scouting Movement**

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This thesis examines the development of the Edwardian Scouting Movement through the experiences of the young, ambitious individuals who first took up Robert Baden-Powell's call-to-action. By putting the recorded testimony of the individuals at the centre of the analysis, this thesis will challenge existing narratives that insinuate boys were passive participants in an organisation directed and founded from the top. Making use of Scouts' diaries, journals, camp notes, scrapbooks, memoirs, and troop records demonstrates that the pioneers at the local, community levels not only had a great deal of autonomy in the function of their troops, but were active agents in developing Scouting across Britain. Likewise, this thesis shows that not only did boys take an active role in shaping the Movement, but they brought with them their previously-held principles and ideologies that often amplified Scouting's operations. Before the Boy Scouts became the organisation it is recognised as today, it was a movement encouraged and developed by enthusiastic youth through grass-roots initiative.

By viewing the Scouting Movement through a 'history from below' approach, I will situate my research within wider academic fields of nationalism, youth culture, class, and imperial culture. I will demonstrate that the Scouting Movement was a reflection of broader Edwardian trends of patriotism, national anxiety, and martial culture. Likewise, this thesis shows that average people throughout Britain, with no official ties to the Empire or state, contributed consciously to the nation through their efforts with the Scouting Movement. The Edwardian Scouting Movement served as a mechanism through which youth were able to express their understandings of social and national issues; participate in vocational and military training; and serve their country by working for their local communities.

## Introduction

In April of 1911, Lord Kitchener addressed a group of approximately one thousand Boy Scouts participating in a public parade on a Leicestershire cricket ground. In his speech, reported throughout the British press at the time, the famous military commander told the boys how important he believed the Scouting Movement was and why he supported its expansion. Kitchener stated that,

the more he knew of the Scouts' organisation the more admirable he thought it to be, and the more fully persuaded he was that it should appeal strongly to every father and mother who desired to bring up their sons well.<sup>1</sup>

Kitchener, according to *The Times*, stated the reasons in which he believed British parents should encourage their children to take up Scouting and why the nation would benefit. He argued that “it broke down class prejudice” by promoting “comradeship, discipline, resourcefulness, self-reliance, and sympathy.”<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, linking the Movement to British nationalism and faith, Kitchener stated that Scouting’s “ideals are the highest Christianity and patriotism,” and that “later, when those Scouts were grown up, what prouder title could they each aspire to than to be known as a true man and pure patriot?”<sup>3</sup> To Kitchener, Scouting was an opportunity for boys across the country to train themselves to better serve their communities and nation. The symbols and practitioners of these ideas, according to Kitchener, were “what they [boys] were all now learning to become” through their association with the Scouting Movement.<sup>4</sup>

Kitchener’s speech highlights several perceptions many Edwardian proponents of Scouting had about the Movement. He linked Scouting directly with communal

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<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, “Lord Kitchener and the Boy Scouts,” 19 April 1911, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.



responsibility, personal health, and national service and stated Scouting had the ability to alleviate class conflict. While historians of Scouting have researched each of these aspects Kitchener addressed in his speech, they have largely focused on ideology or elites, such as Kitchener and founder Robert Baden-Powell.<sup>5</sup> I am more interested in what the boys themselves thought about Scouting and their roles within the Movement.<sup>6</sup> Even though Kitchener spoke to an audience of Boy Scouts, he put himself and his own opinion of the Movement in the focus rather than the boys themselves. The *Daily Mail* reported that he said:

What appeals to me, and I am sure appeals equally to all present, is that we have here a large number of England's boys, soon to become England's men, hard at work training themselves to do something for the good of their country, for the good of the nation, and for the good of themselves.<sup>7</sup>

Kitchener, who was president of the North London Scouts at the time, as well as an old friend and former commanding officer of Baden-Powell, removed any notion of autonomy from the boys. Speaking in front of nearly one thousand of them, he spoke on their behalf and presupposed that the reasons why the boys joined the Movement were the same reasons he supported it. It is the goal of this thesis, broadly, to give these voiceless audience members, whose opinions were ignored by reports in *The Times* and the *Daily Mail* on that day, a chance to speak about their own experience in the Scouting Movement; what Scouting meant to them; how they understood the Movement and their involvement within greater society; the ways in which they incorporated Edwardian social initiatives and politics into their local Scouting curriculum; and how these young boys and men used the Movement as an opportunity to prepare themselves for national service.

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<sup>5</sup> The next chapter will examine Scouting historiography in much greater detail.

<sup>6</sup> When refereeing to the Scouting Movement specifically, I will use a capitalised 'M'. Likewise, 'Scout', 'Scouts', and 'Scouting' will be capitalised when I refer to individuals and the Movement. Given that it quickly became institutionalised after its inception and that it incorporated a specific organised body, referring to these words as proper nouns is appropriate.

<sup>7</sup> Lord Kitchener, "Lord Kitchener," *Daily Mail*, 19 April 1911, p. 5.

With these connected goals in mind, this thesis will test Kitchener's assumption that boys shared the ideological vision of himself, Baden-Powell, and likeminded individuals by examining how the Scouts described their own experiences. To accomplish this, I will use the boys' own testimonies and records to reveal that Scouting reflected broader social trends and attitudes rather than the specific vision of an imperialist ideologue. Ultimately, while the experiences captured in surviving sources cannot act as totally representative examples for the Movement as a whole, this thesis will show that these energetic and enthusiastic Scouts acted at the local level with their troops, yet were often motivated by larger national and imperial concerns separate and independent from what Baden-Powell intended. The boys examined in this thesis took an active role in their own association with the Movement, their communities, and their understanding of their civic responsibility.

This thesis will achieve three main objectives. First, my research puts the focus on the individual members at a local level, recovering their experiences in their own words. Shifting the focus to the Scouts on the ground demonstrates that these boys had a much greater role in shaping the Movement and their own experience than previously assumed. Early Scout founders, members, and leaders were not simply participants in an organisation led from the top, but helped outline and develop the Movement in their local communities through their own initiative. While they were inspired by Baden-Powell's texts, their own agency translated the ideology he espoused and determined how troops operated on the ground level. For example, as chapter three will show, we know that some troops maintained a stance of pacifism during the First World War, even if many more troops actively trained for battle in accordance with their founder's expectations.<sup>8</sup> Many of the enthusiastic founders, however, followed a path that closely mirrored official narratives. The young

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<sup>8</sup> Cecil Pearce, *Comrades in Conscience: The Story of an English Community's Opposition to the Great War* (London: Francis Boutle Publishers, 2001), pp. 176-190.

leaders took it upon themselves to instil those under their charge with the values and ideologies Scouting promoted.

Second, this thesis argues that Scouting reflected a culture of patriotism and national service in Edwardian Britain. In the 1980s, Allen Warren cautioned historians of Scouting that we must take care not to place too high a degree of importance on a single movement or single man.<sup>9</sup> The Scouting Movement did not simply realise the principles promoted by Baden-Powell, but rather allowed boys a mechanism through which they could express the ideals to which they were already exposed. The assembled evidence illuminates how Scouting allowed boys to create a curriculum that best suited their own needs. Furthermore, as evidenced in part by other Victorian and Edwardian organisations and initiatives prevalent throughout the nation, Scouting reflected wider efforts to improve the moral and physical health of youth. The boys highlighted in this thesis did not create their worldviews or social identities exclusively through a Scouting framework. Many boys were drawn to the Movement through previous affiliations with groups like the Boys' Brigade, out of sense of familial or national responsibility, and because of efforts to get boys involved in educational activities. Scouting was one of many institutions and efforts that promoted morality, citizenship, and duty in young people. Many of the boys in my thesis used the Movement as a framework through which they understood many political and social issues of the day.

Finally, I use the Scouting Movement as a lens to examine the broader discussion concerning who was impacted by empire and how average citizens experienced imperialism and nationalism through their communal associations. This thesis will place the Scouting Movement and the involved individuals within a wider national and imperial context by showing that boys acted within their local spaces, yet consciously contributed to a national and imperial effort. My thesis contributes to the wider literature on imperial culture and

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<sup>9</sup> Allen Warren. "Sir Robert Baden-Powell, the Scout Movement, and Citizen Training in Great Britain, 1900-1920," *The English Historical Review*, 101.399 (1986), pp. 376-378.

experience of empire and nationalism in the domestic arena. While Sam Pryke observes that nationalism was “central to the organisation and informed virtually every aspect of its ethos and practice,” this thesis analyses how and in what ways the boys articulated and conceptualised these ideas and texts in order to broaden our understanding of how people interacted with nationalism and imperialism in their everyday lives.<sup>10</sup> This thesis will show that boys’ local communal works and activities were often performed with the belief that their small efforts contributed to the country as a whole.

This thesis is organised into three thematically organised sections, made up of six main chapters. The first section, chapters one and two, will analyse my methodological approach and discuss what personal testimonies can and cannot tell us about boys’ Scouting experience. The first chapter will also place this project within broader historical literature and ground my research in the social history of Edwardian and imperial Britain. The second chapter one will examine the origins of the Scouting Movement, both in terms of its official teaching from Robert Baden-Powell and how it developed at the ground level by local individuals. Examining the background of Scouting at the onset is crucial to demonstrate its organic development. Scouting originated as a movement before it was organised into the institution it is recognised as today. That boys and individuals created patrols and developed a curriculum and framework based on their understanding of Baden-Powell’s text and their own conceptions of what the Movement stood for will provide us an insight into the ways in which imperial and nationalist elements of Edwardian society played into everyday associations. The first section will address what Scouting was, how it originated, and what those who shaped the Movement can tell us about their association with Scouting and their links with the greater national, imperial, and social atmosphere of Edwardian Britain.

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<sup>10</sup> Sam Pryke, “Popularity of Nationalism in the early British Boy Scout Movement,” *Social History*, 23.3 (1998), p. 310.

The second and third sections, and four main-body chapters of this thesis, are grouped around two main themes: personal development and national service. While the two sections may appear to raise separate issues, they are connected by the main idea that self-reliance was a central feature in Scouting activities, which not only reflected Baden-Powell's ideological underpinnings that he provided for Scouting, but demonstrates that the boys' personal initiative contributed to their Scouting experience. Scouting was an effort to promote character, health, and ideas of civic responsibility in youth. These chapters will examine the personal testimony and written experience of Scouts to uncover the ways in which boys incorporated Scouting into their lives.

The third chapter, entitled 'Local Origins and Economic Exclusion,' examines the background of the individual boys and the origins of their troops. Looking at the origin stories of local troops will give us a sense of who took up Scouting directly and what ideas, texts, and influences were implemented in the troops' creation. This chapter will also demonstrate that traditional social hierarchies permeated Scouting, regardless of official rhetoric of class-inclusiveness, through material costs of participation, as well as the significant appropriation of existing cultural values. Finally, this chapter examines how Scout merit badges and awards reinforced ideological and popular conceptions of class identity and economic politics.

Chapter four, entitled 'Self-Discipline and Character,' will focus on the broad theme of character and personal well-being. Scouting's emphasis on physical and moral health reflected broader Edwardian anxieties over national wellbeing. Through fitness regimes, games, and activities, Scouts created a regimented and ritualised practice of health and hygiene that fostered brotherhood and prepared them for national service. This chapter will also show that young leaders adopted paternalistic roles in their troops and taught their subordinates that troop success and citizenship were linked with mental and physical purity.

As Baden-Powell was the founder and ‘Chief Scout’ of the Movement, enthusiastic boys and individuals on the ground level examined in this chapter acted as moral guides and developed activities and rules designed to teach character to the younger Scouts under their charge.

The final section will examine ideas of nationhood and communal responsibility in the lived experience of the Scouting Movement. Chapter five of this thesis focuses on the Scouts’ experience with civic duty and image. The chapter, entitled ‘Scouts on Display: Nationhood, Service, and Public Representation,’ demonstrates that boys often acted locally, yet understood their efforts as contributors to the nation at large. Through parades, their displays of images and personal items, and public demonstrations, boys attempted to make themselves visible to their local communities. Furthermore, their work with the military and police validated their efforts and linked their involvement in Scouting with greater national causes. Civic duty was an abstract concept that allowed individuals to express the meaning for themselves, yet with the possibility of war on the horizon, many Scouts defined their own understanding of nationhood and citizenship through national service in police, military, and coast-watching. It was this combination of patriotic ideology and practical application of Scout training which led many Scouts to view their efforts in what this thesis terms ‘hyper-citizenship’. Following on the work on ‘hyperrealism’ conducted by scholars such as Umberto Eco and Jean Baudrillard, I argue that Scouting was both an inward and outward looking performance of citizenship.<sup>11</sup> As this thesis will show, Scout records indicate that many boys had a perception of superiority and self-importance due to their Movement affiliation. Given that they participated in national defence and community works while being exposed to an image of an ideal Scout archetype from above, modelled on fictional, mythical, and real-life figures, the term ‘hyper-citizenship’ best captures these boys’ understanding of the Movement and their personal roles within it.

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<sup>11</sup> See Umberto Eco, *Travels in Hyperreality*, trans. by William Weaver (London: Picado, 1986) and Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. by Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1994).

The final, main body chapter entitled ‘Scouts at War’ will look at the experience of Scouting just before and during the First World War. Individual boys developed military training practises and encouraged their troops to participate in direct national defence. These boys often emulated and appropriated broader concepts of imperial and national culture from texts and social leaders, and used such images and ideas to guide and shape their own understanding of the wider world and apply it to their own corners of the Movement. Individuals also used Scouting as a mechanism through which they could express their own attitudes towards patriotism. Finally, this chapter will show, through their collaboration with local shooting clubs, their affiliations with the Cadets, and their partnerships with other youth organisations, that Scouting was reflective of a wider social martial spirit. Scouting’s official resistance towards compulsory cadet training was inconsequential, given that boys developed military training exercises at the local level on their own initiative.<sup>12</sup> Scout troops’ military training serves as a stark example of how curriculum was developed and how nationalistic and militaristic ideologies were applied to the Scout Movement through youth agency at the local, community levels.

The first two chapters will provide background into the lives and earliest experiences of these boys, while the second half will demonstrate how they used Scouting to contribute to their local communities and the nation. At the heart of each of these chapters, however, is the main objective of placing the Scouting experience back with the boys themselves. Doing so demonstrates that Scouts made Scouting, and only partially in Baden-Powell’s image. It was through their initiative and personal understanding of the Movement that Scouting developed. By looking at the history of Scouting from below, it is this thesis’s aim to recover the voices of the shapers of the Movement and better understand how these young, patriotic, and dutiful

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<sup>12</sup> Chapter two will discuss the issue of Baden-Powell’s resistance towards compulsory military training and assimilation of the Scouts into the Cadet Corps.

citizens experienced broader impacts of nationalism and imperialism through their efforts with the Scouting Movement.



## **Chapter I. Methods and Historiography**

This chapter will situate my research within the historiography of Scouting, as well as broader literature concerning Edwardian Britain's imperial and military culture. Likewise, this chapter will examine and define ideas of citizenship and how they are used in this thesis, particularly as they are relevant to the final two chapters, where I narrow in on Scouts' relationship with civic duty and public displays. Furthermore, this chapter will serve to outline my methodologies and ideas that structure the project. While this thesis examines the Edwardian Scouting Movement, its approach and indeed the Movement itself offer historians in many fields of research examples of individual and collective participation in social movements, nationalism, and imperial culture. The experiences of those involved in the Scouting Movement demonstrate how and in what ways these enthusiastic young Edwardians engaged with politics and citizenship.

This chapter is divided into two main sections. First, I will outline my methodological approach and demonstrate how a Scouting history from below can illuminate more about the lived Scouting experience. I will discuss what my sources can and cannot tell us, how they are useful in historical analysis and what their limitations are, and how I deploy them throughout my thesis. Second, I will develop my research from the historiography of Scouting and relevant theoretical and historical approaches to show why a 'history from below' study is necessary. Many historians have discussed Scouting as a reflection of a broad nationalist, martial, and imperial culture. I suggest that boys' testimonies reveal that Scouting was a practice of these concepts by individuals at local, community levels.

### **Methodology and Approach**

Reflecting the unstructured nature of Scouting's early days, the sources of the pre-First World War Movement exist somewhat haphazardly and throughout the country. The Scout Association Archives at Gilwell Park holds the largest single collection of records, accumulated largely through donation. However, as this study is concerned with the experience of the individuals on the ground, the sources, like the people, exist in many different locations and spaces outside of the official Scout Headquarters Archives. My primary sources were obtained from county record offices, city libraries, museums, universities, family shoeboxes, and even a pub. The main goal of my thesis, embodied in my methodology, is to give the boys a voice in their own association with the Movement. Allowing the boys' experience a greater presence in the historical understanding of Scouting will give us a better insight into how individuals understood their association with an organisation and ideologically driven movement that was imbued with nationalist rhetoric and agendas. That these individual actors viewed themselves as proactive and civic-minded young citizens, it is crucial we hear their voice to gain an insight into their relationship with the broader imperial culture of Edwardian Britain.

This thesis makes heavy use of the personal testimony boys and troops of the pre-First World War Boy Scouts left behind. Organised groups of boys, who turned themselves into troops, left detailed recordings of their meetings, activities, trips, and thoughts. This thesis uses these boys' diaries, personal journals, photo albums, newspaper clippings, scrapbooks, troop minutes, registers, and community magazines to reclaim the voices of those who pioneered the Scouting Movement. If the idea for Scouting was initiated by text, we must also consider how and in what ways literature impacted boys' lives. Developing Benedict Anderson's idea of the nation as an "imagined political community," connected in part through textually represented social and cultural mechanisms, we can view Scouts as an imagined community linked by the textual codification of Scouting and by the wider imperial

literature from which it drew.<sup>13</sup> Thomas Richards also argues that literature created the image of the Empire for the British public, arguing the “legacy of Romanticism” in Victorian imperial literature “made possible the fantasy of an imperial archive in which the control of Empire hinges on a British monopoly of knowledge.”<sup>14</sup> Scouting represented the physical manifestation of this literary fantasy. Through the appropriation of Baden-Powell’s teachings by the Scouts and their own interpretation of the Movement’s principles, these boys recorded their experience of the Movement in their own writings, journals, and publications.

Furthermore, as Roger Chartier argues, the author is dependent on the audience who appropriate his or her works through reading. We can see the imperial and nationalistic discourse found in the pages of youth literature became “physical realities” not only when Baden-Powell disseminated them in his writings, but when boys enacted them in their Scout activities and services.<sup>15</sup> The boys’ personal records which I use in this thesis demonstrate that the early Scouts did indeed rely on Baden-Powell’s texts for encouragement, yet they still developed curriculum, activities, and their own image based on their interpretation of Scouting’s texts and ideas. Likewise, as this chapter will later demonstrate, Baden-Powell developed Scouting and wrote *Scouting for Boys* based largely on what he observed from boys’ behaviour and interests, a process that continued to feed later editions of his key text and other publications.

Yet, as my research demonstrates, Baden-Powell was not the only author in the Scouting Movement: the boys themselves, as reflected in their community magazines, personal diaries, journals, and interviews, became active agents in disseminating Scouting to a national audience and each other. We can understand the empirical reality of Scouting

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<sup>13</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised Edition (London: Verso, 2006), p. 6.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire* (London: Verso, 1993), p. 7.

<sup>15</sup> Chartier, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, translated by Lydia G. Cochrane (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), pp. ix and 28.

better through Robert Darnton's influential concept of a "communications circuit."<sup>16</sup> Baden-Powell wrote texts, distributed through partnered publishers, which were absorbed by an audience who put his message into physical action. While Darnton argues that "readers complete the circuit, because he influences the author before and after the act of composition,"<sup>17</sup> we can see in the Scouting Movement that readers also became authors.<sup>17</sup> Their voice and understanding of the Movement is what propelled it forward, while the boys most enthusiastic about Baden-Powell's text amplified its message and function at the ground levels. By grounding my approach in these methodological ideas of reading communities, I can demonstrate that the earliest Scouts viewed themselves as part of an ideological movement, as opposed to the organisation Scouting later became. It is these young voices that appear least frequent in the historiography and their testimony which is most crucial to understand the experience of those who actually founded troops throughout the country. While Baden-Powell attempted to create a homogenised Scout community, the Scouts' records indicate this was not always the case. Therefore, it is crucial to use the boys' testimony to gain a better understanding of what the Movement looked like at the lowest levels.

The majority of the sources I use in this thesis mainly exist in four formats: community magazines and minute books; oral interviews from First World War Veterans; unpublished memoirs written at various points in individuals' Scout memberships and lives; and personal diaries and Scout journals. First, I make heavy use of troop and patrol magazines, minute books, pamphlets, and other materials that boys shared and contributed to during their time as Scouts. These source sets range from homemade and hand drawn magazines, modelled after publications such as *Boys' Own* and *Chums*, that boys shared amongst themselves; records of troop meetings; and pamphlets and programmes for public productions and events that boys

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<sup>16</sup> Robert Darnton, "What is the History of Books?" *Daedalus*, 111.3 (Summer 1982), p. 67.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

made to generate interest in their troop activities. The content contained in these community magazines and minute books, one of which I will examine later in this section, shows which kinds of ideals, images, and material the boys shared amongst each other. Therefore, these magazines show us what these individuals believed reflected their understanding of the Movement, how they presented themselves to their peers, and how they chose to reflect their troops collectively to each other.

Second, I collected oral interviews of First World War veterans that were conducted by the Imperial War Museum in the 1980s.<sup>18</sup> While these sources are used briefly and sparingly in my thesis, they highlight the ways Scouts-turned-soldiers understood the links between the Scouting Movement and their military service. The majority of my soldier-Scout evidence, however, does not come from this source set. Local Scout records make up the bulk of my primary source material throughout my thesis and in the chapters that focus specifically on the war and national wartime service. This is true for two main reasons: first, is that I wanted to keep my evidence localised to the troops and individuals as much as possible and second, is that the interviews conducted by the Imperial War Museum could only include those who survived the war. As chapter six will demonstrate, this thesis is also concerned with uncovering the testimony of boys who trained for a military life and combat and who reflected militaristic and nationalistic imaginations in their Scouting experience only to be killed in the First World War. The juxtaposition of images—from performing military drills with broomstick ‘rifles’ to a grisly death on a French battlefield—serves to remind us how Baden-Powell and Victorian and Edwardian adventure literature projected an image of combat to youth that did not always match Scouts’ reality of modern warfare. Therefore, while the oral interviews conducted by the Imperial War Museum only make up a small

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<sup>18</sup> Imperial War Museum, *Collections* <<http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections>>.

proportion of my first-hand testimony, they do provide a valuable insight into how these men remembered their Scouting and war experience.

Third, my source set includes diaries and auto-biographical texts from Scouts and former Scouts that were written at various stages of their lives. Some of these sources are more formal, and were written at the request of the Scout Association Archives or by Scout leaders from respective troops in more recent decades. They include information not only about the authors' personal experience with Scouting, but histories and origins of the collective troop. Troop histories, therefore, are often predicated on the author's viewpoint. Likewise, the autobiographies were written at various stages in life. Alexander Fisher, a Scout from the Manchester area, for example, wrote his memoir when he was in his early twenties while in Wales waiting to be sent to the Front, only months after he had to stop actively participating in Scouting. Alwyn Dawson, however, a Scout from Chiswick, wrote his troop's history as an older man in 1978. While we must consider that these sources were presumably written by those most enthusiastic about Scouting, they are invaluable to this thesis in that they inform us about how keen Scouts, those most committed to the Movement, remembered and presented their experience to an audience comprised of peers, non-Scouts, historians, and future Scouts.

Finally, diaries, and notes boys wrote while at camps and jamborees offer an insight into boys' personal relationship with Scouting. This thesis uses personal journals, donated to archives later in life or by family, which boys kept of their Scout experience. These are both homemade from normal notebooks and standardised Scout diaries sold by the Scout Association.<sup>19</sup> Personal diaries provide us with an insight into a boy's thoughts as well as recollection of an event much closer to its occurrence. Furthermore, while boys were

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<sup>19</sup> I will examine Scout merchandise in chapter three.

encouraged to write journals and camp diaries by their leaders as part of Scout teaching, these sources are the items that are the closest record we have of individuals' own voices.

Of course, like all sources, these personal ephemera come with their own sets of issues. Of the surviving sources that exist, the testimonies and records were mostly consciously created from a self-selecting sample of members and experiences. Likewise, those who did record their beliefs and experience were likely the most enthusiastic boys involved in the Movement. These boys, however, are exactly the ones who need attention, as they were the ones who started troops, organised, volunteered, and acted as the faces and voices of the Movement to the public. That the most enthusiastic Scouts were ones who created the records also reflected their understanding of the role they played in local Scouting. While it is impossible to hear the voices of all 150,000 boys enrolled with Scouting by 1914, we can get a sense of how these most active and engaged members understood their role in the Movement and society.

Furthermore, as Marie-François Chanfrault-Duchet writes that “tension exists between self and society” and that people construct autobiography around not only events and facts, but on “social representations and cultural values,” we must remember that these boys recorded their experience under a series of conditioning factors.<sup>20</sup> Often, Scouts did not record their experience until later in life, which runs the risk of relying on testimony from people who may misremember, exaggerate, diminish or omit details, or even mislead the interviewer because of political, ideological, or personal agendas. Furthermore, Scouts created a cultural construct of Baden-Powell and other imperial and national images through which they appropriated his image into their own experience. This thesis does not claim the boys in this study are representative figures, but what it does show is how the existing records of the most pro-active members of the Movement understood their role in Edwardian Britain

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<sup>20</sup> Marie-François Chanfrault-Duchet, “Textualisation of the self and gender identity in the life-story,” *Feminism & Autobiography: Texts, theories, methods*, ed. by Tess Cosslett, Celia Lury, and Penny Summerfield (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 61.

through their association with a movement defined by civic responsibility, communal service, military preparedness, national efficiency, and patriotism. Records from the most enthusiastic members of the Scouting Movement also demonstrate that Baden-Powell was not their only influence. He created a platform, but not a new impetus, for a movement that offered boys a mechanism to contribute to community and national service efforts.

Using Ancestry's database to explore the backgrounds of individuals' church, military records, and census information reveals the occupation of these boys' fathers and gives us a sense of their family's financial stability and purchasing power. However, peoples' occupations present the historian similar difficulties to fully uncover family financial dynamics. Occupations are only rough proxies for wealth, especially when we consider regional variations in relative income during this period.<sup>21</sup> I argue that 'class' mattered most to Scouting in terms of affordability. While impossible to uncover the save and spending habits of these boys' families, the father's profession is a useful gauge for making averages. Of the boys featured in this thesis, they came predominately from salaried professions, meaning a family could better plan their financial matters around a known income, as opposed to a wage labourer whose income varied or was uncertain. As I will show in the third chapter, many of the boys highlighted in this thesis were leaders in their respective troops and came from families with a presumed stable income. As sons of clerks, domestic grooms, shop owners, solicitors, they not only demonstrated an ability to fully participate in Scouting, but show that while Scouting was theoretically open to all, full participation and earning leadership positions was more easily achieved by those who could afford the time and costs.

The kinds of records themselves that boys left behind also tell us a great deal about how these Scouts imagined their role in the Movement. Community magazines in particular

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<sup>21</sup> Jose Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit: Britain 1870-1914* (London: Penguin, 1993), p. 125.



demonstrate how these boys attempted to emulate wider literary culture, yet developed publications and texts through their own efforts. Community magazines and troop journals were spaces where boys often projected the image of their patrols they wished their audience to see. Aside from acting as the written projection of the troops, community magazines served as information centres. They outlined troop rules and agendas, and most important, offered boys' a forum through which they could record their experience with the Movement. Later chapters will analyse the Scouts' experience that was recorded in such records. It is necessary at this stage, however, to examine the magazines themselves in order to highlight the sources that contribute to my methodological approach.

As an example, let us examine the troop magazine from a troop from Clapham. This patrol's magazine was named *The Raven*, after the patrol. It contained agendas, minutes, and practical, timetable information to which members could refer. More importantly, however, the pages of these issues were filled with messages from the young troop leaders; stories and poems either taken from popular juvenile magazines or written by the boys themselves; inspirational anecdotes; newspaper clippings of Scout activities from around the country; and lessons about Scouting derived from Baden-Powell and disseminated by the local leaders. The significance of this magazine was that it was created and operated by the boys themselves. *The Raven* provided boys opportunities to contribute to the magazine's content, which increased their responsibility and agency in the Movement. While my approach only takes a small sample of the large number of boys who participated in Scouting, due in large part to the dearth of surviving records from the pre-war period, examples like *The Raven* written and shared by this community of young readers and Scouts demonstrate how these enthusiastic boys imagined themselves as part of the Movement and nation, and how their actions amplified Scouting's message at the local level.

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Why I am a Boy Scout

C. Goddard

The reasons why I am a Boy Scout are —

(i) Because if possible I am going to join the army one day, & scouting is a good recreation & preparation.

(ii) Because it is my mother & father's wish.

(iii) Because it affords healthy exercise to the physical as well as the mental faculties.

Scouting for Boys started by Lieutenant General Baden-Powell, has already taken such a hold on British boys, that not counting the C. L. B., which has taken up the Boy Scouts' training, and the colonies, there are over 4,500 scouts in Great Britain alone. I always look forward with pleasure to my Saturdays, which are nearly always devoted to scouting, for they are the happiest times in my life.

**Figure 1.1. *The Raven*, Patrol Magazine for the 1<sup>st</sup> Clapham Raven Patrol (1909).**  
*The Raven*, Scout Association Archives, TSA/PER/100/1.

While personal diaries and community magazines raise issues of 'authenticity' and actual experience, they do reflect how boys and troops presented their Scouting identity and experience to each other, their families, the community, and even themselves. Likewise, the sources I use in my thesis reflect that Scouts were influenced by a variety of social and cultural factors, not simply Baden-Powell and the official Scouting principles. Minute books, troop plans, and personal diaries demonstrate local boys shaped Scouting at the local level, while their pre-existing ideas regarding patriotism and moral character amplified Scouting's influence in communities. Highlighting these enthusiastic Scouts' voices will allow us to better recognise the ways in which Scouting operated at local levels; to see the ways in which broad imperial culture played into peoples' everyday lives; and to better understand how youth used this movement to contribute to their country. With these agendas in mind, this

chapter will now examine the broader historiography in order to place my research within wider academic fields.

### **Historiography and the Importance of the Boys' Experience.**

The experience of an Edwardian Scout named H. J. Nicholls highlights why examining the records and testimonies of the boys themselves is crucial. A contemporary newspaper clipping stated that in the Summer of 1909, "Patrol Leader Nicholls, who is representing the Hastings District at General Baden-Powell's Camp, is having the time of his life."<sup>22</sup> The newspaper account of Nicholls's experience at camp also stated that the boy enjoyed "whale hunting" games and Sea Scout training.<sup>23</sup> Again, like Kitchener's speech shown in this thesis's introduction, we can see someone in the adult world speaking on behalf of the youth.<sup>24</sup> The author of this report listed the camp's activities and described how much fun the Nicholls and the boys had, creating an image of the camp represented solely from the point-of-view of an outsider. This report reflected a vision of the Movement that asserted Scouting's benefit to boys' moral development, health, and civic responsibility. What it conspicuously absent, however, was what Nicholls thought about the camp or Scouting in general. With the exception of one quotation where the young patrol leader was cited saying the whale hunting game was "exciting," his voice was otherwise omitted. Luckily for the historian, a letter he wrote to his mother survives in the records and provides a better insight into his experience at camp.

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<sup>22</sup> "Nicholls," Scout Association Archives, TSA/PER/29/1.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> While Nicholls's exact age is unknown, he appeared to be in his mid-teenage years judging from his photograph. Likewise, as a patrol leader, it is likely he would have been around sixteen or seventeen years old.



**Figure 1.2. H. S. Nicholls and his troop, circa 1909-1914.**  
H.S. Nicholls, Scout Association Archives, TSA/PER/29/1.

In his letter, Nicholls told his mother some of the various activities in which he and his fellow Scouts participated. He wrote about how regimented the camp was and informed her about some of the more mundane aspects, saying for example, where they marched on certain days and which routes they took to camp.<sup>25</sup> In contrast to the newspaper report, however, he did spend a significant part of the letter complaining. He told his mother that they “do not get very good grub” and did not seem too happy about waking up at 6:30 am for drill.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, Nicholls also lamented to his mother that he forgot his bathing costume

<sup>25</sup> “Nicholls,” Scout Association Archives.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

and was consequently not able to swim.<sup>27</sup> This contrast in reporting, between the newspaper article and his letter home, is exactly why examining the personal records of the boys is crucial in order to more fully understand Scouting and individuals' association with the nationalist movement. It is also indicative of the performative aspects of sources. He answered the reporter's questions very positively, while saved his complaints for his mother. This is not to suggest that Nicholls held a negative opinion about his camp and lied to the interviewer, but rather highlights the dual nature of his experience.

That a boy wrote a letter to his mother expressing homesickness or grumbling about poor quality food at camp is not what is important here. What is significant, however, is that Nicholl's experience was placed in the background by the newspaper reporter, and overshadowed by how Scouting was perceived by an outside, adult figure. The letter to his mother was Nicholls's voice, as expressed by himself without a Scout leader or member of the Scout establishment present. Although his experience was only his and not necessarily reflective of the Movement as a whole, it does serve to exemplify the relationship between the boys, official Scout leadership, and outside commentary. It was completely void of the ideological sentiment expressed by the likes of Kitchener, while his complaining shows the other side to camp that the newspaper omitted. Nicholls may have trained and participated in nationalistic activities and he may have been sympathetic to Scouting's moral message, yet he was also a boy who forgot his trunks and complained to his mother. Boys' personal testimonies remind us of their dual state as adolescents and Scouts.

The Scouting Movement has appeared as the subject of serious historical scrutiny, and it has been featured in short examples within broader works on Edwardian military and imperial culture. Too little attention, however, has been paid to the members at the lower and local levels. This thesis examines the Scouting Movement through the lens of the boys

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.



themselves and draws its conclusions based on their experience. The historical debate on the Scouting Movement has largely centred around the ideological and cultural foundation, regarding how Scouting was able to take hold in Edwardian Britain, and on the charismatic founder himself. While my research is less concerned with Baden-Powell than it is with the lived experience of the Movement's members at the bottom levels, this chapter will address the Chief Scout to provide some background understanding.<sup>28</sup> Given that my thesis is focused on the boys themselves, as opposed to the top-ranking leaders, I will only focus on the necessary background. I argue that we need to place the Scouting experience within the broader fields of Edwardian, imperial culture, and patriotism to get a more complete picture of the system under which these boys lived and carried out their Scout activities.

Much of what has been written about Scouting before the First World War since the late 1980s has followed Michael Rosenthal's argument regarding Baden-Powell's attempt to create a model of class supremacy. He argued that Scouting, owing much of its ideological development to the English public school, was created to ensure Britain's imperial and global dominance by developing on public schools' aspiration to "produce one overriding train in their boys: an all-consuming loyalty—to side, to institution, to class, to country."<sup>29</sup> He argued that Baden-Powell intended for upper-class boys to develop Scouting programmes and recruit working-class boys in their communities to teach them proper lessons of citizenship and duty. The Chief Scout's plan, however, was only partially successful. John Springhall's work demonstrates that individuals from the upper classes were disproportionately represented in the highest ranks of the Movement.<sup>30</sup> The majority of

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<sup>28</sup> For specific biographies on Robert Baden-Powell, please see William Hillcourt, *Baden-Powell: The Two Lives of a Hero* (London: Heinemann, 1964); Michael Rosenthal, *The Character Factory: Baden-Powell and the Origins of the Boy Scout Movement* (London: Collins, 1986) ; and Tim Jeal, *The Boy-Man* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1990).

<sup>29</sup> Rosenthal, *Character Factory*, p. 91.

<sup>30</sup> John Springhall, *Youth, Empire, and Society: British Youth Movements, 1883-1914* (London: Croom Helm, 1977), p. 92.

Scouts, however, were not from working and poorer backgrounds that Baden-Powell hoped for, but from economically comfortable middle-class families.<sup>31</sup> The reality of the situation on the ground, therefore, was that Scouting drew in boys who were already exposed to the ideas Baden-Powell promoted before they joined the Movement. While many historians have analysed and unpacked Scouting's official class agendas, the voices of the boys themselves have been largely absent. Chapter three of this thesis will examine how individual Scouts and troops reflected, imagined, and related to Baden-Powell and Edwardian society's class dimensions.

As accusations of nationalism and militarism have plagued the Scouting Movement from its founding, much of the historiography reflects the ways in which concepts of war, empire, and masculinity infiltrated Scouting's makeup. Indeed the battlefield, as Robert MacDonald has noted, was professed by Baden-Powell and Scouting officials as the ultimate testing ground for manhood due to fears that British boys were becoming too weak and effeminate.<sup>32</sup> Likewise, Michael Humphries's research demonstrates that while there was not an official link between Scouting and military forces, many early Scouts made up the ranks of the Legion of Frontiersmen.<sup>33</sup> Timothy Parsons observes that Scouting originated in the colonial context and was bolstered through Western conceptions of muscular Christianity and perceived African traits of masculinity and rites of passage into manhood.<sup>34</sup> While official Scout rhetoric and activities moved away from its characteristically nationalistic and militaristic tone after the war, Tammy Proctor observes that in order for Scouting to adopt a

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<sup>31</sup> Sam Pryke, "The control of sexuality in the early British Boy Scouts movement," *Sex Education*, 5.1 (2005), p. 24.

<sup>32</sup> Robert MacDonald, *Sons of the Empire: The Frontier and the Boy Scout Movement, 1890-1918* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), pp. 16-28.

<sup>33</sup> Michael Humphries, "'The eyes of an empire': the Legion of Frontiersmen, 1904-1914," *Historical Research*, 85.227 (2012).

<sup>34</sup> Timothy Parsons, *Race, Resistance and the Boy Scout Movement in British Colonial Africa* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2004) and Timothy Parsons, "Een-Gonyama, Gonyama: Zulu Origins of the Boy Scout Movement and the Africanization of Imperial Britain," *Parliamentary History*, 27.1 (2008), pp. 57-66. See also Jialin Christina Wu, "'A Life of Make-Believe': Being Boy Scouts and 'Playing Indian' in British Malaya (1910-1942)," *Gender and History*, 26.3 (2014), pp. 589-619.

more ‘pacifist’ image, it had to redefine ‘manhood’ away from the national servant ideal into one that focused more on family and private life.<sup>35</sup> Recently, more attention has been paid to the Girl Guides and the role girls and women in Scouting. In applying an international feminist view to the Movement, Sarah Mills argues that initial, everyday practices of girls and Girl Guides challenged established and exclusionary masculinities in the Boy Scout Movement.<sup>36</sup> John Springhall has argued that Scouting developed from a culture of militarism in Edwardian Britain. While Allen Warren notably argued Springhall went too far in his accusations of militarism in the lived experience of Scouting, military structures and curriculum depended largely on local troop leaders. Many of whom, as my thesis will demonstrate, were sympathetic with Baden-Powell’s brand of military preparation.<sup>37</sup> I argue that many boys believed in the central ideas of patriotism, national service, and civic responsibility due to factors other than Scouting alone. While their associations with patriotism and the nation were varied and nuanced, their association with Scouting and their actions amplified the Movement at the local level.

The Scouting Movement should be viewed within wider discourses of Edwardian Britain and imperial culture as an example of how certain youth grappled with wider national and social issues. As such, it is more helpful to analyse the Movement alongside a broader historiography of class, imperial culture, and nationalism, as opposed to one that is focused solely on Scouting. While some aspects of Scouting’s relationship with class issues were typical of Baden-Powell’s personal attitudes, they were by no means unique. Baden-Powell himself, as Allen Warren observes, was influenced by other youth movements and figures

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<sup>35</sup> Tammy Proctor, *On my Honor: Guides and Scouts in Interwar Britain* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2002).

<sup>36</sup> Sarah Mills, “Scouting for Girls?: Gender and the Scout Movement in Britain,” *Gender, Place, and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*, 18.4 (2011), pp. 537-556.

<sup>37</sup> John Springhall, “Baden-Powell and the Boy Scout Movement before 1920: Citizen Training or Soldiers of the Future,” *The English Historical Review*, 102.405 (1987), pp. 934-942 and *Youth, Empire and Society*; and Warren “Baden-Powell, Scout Movement and Citizen Training,” pp. 376-398.



that helped shape his vision for Scouting throughout his life.<sup>38</sup> However, Warren goes too far in dismissing Baden-Powell's influence in Scouting, while John Springhall was right in criticising Warren's claim that Baden-Powell was "no systematic thinker."<sup>39</sup> Baden-Powell was relentless and successful in his attempts to maintain control and hold influence over Scouting. As I will show later in the next chapter, Baden-Powell was heavily influenced by a host of imperial ideas, conservative opinions, and worldviews and became a conduit through which these ideals were transmitted to a large youth audience. Likewise, this thesis uses Scout records to highlight the ways in which individuals understood and reflected imperial images and broader imperial culture in their own lives and communal associations. Baden-Powell may have been a systematic thinker, but his system unfolded based on the passions and initiative of enthusiastic local youth.

For example, the boys of the 5<sup>th</sup> Clapham Troop included many stories and instances of racialized portrayals of colonial spaces and 'orientalist' depictions of non-white peoples. The boys' community magazine included a story, which appeared in various forms in adventure tales and boys' publications since the 1880s, of Native Americans and scalping. Entitled "How it feels to be scalped," a boy writing under the pseudonym "Canute" wrote that an "old frontiersman" described what it was like to be scalped by a Native American warrior:

Imagine someone who hates you with the utmost intensity, grabbing a handful of your hair while you are lying prostrate & helpless, & giving it a sudden jerk upward with force enough almost to loosen the scalp; then, while this painful tension is not relaxed, imagine the not particularly sharp blade of a knife being run quickly in a circle round your scalp with a sawlike (*sic*) motion.<sup>40</sup>

This story, with exact and similar language appeared at least as far back as 1883, in the *New York Times*, and was retold in other publications for decades after, reaching this small group

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<sup>38</sup> Warren, "Baden-Powell, Scout Movement, Citizen Training," p. 379.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, p. 387. See 1980s debate between Warren and Springhall. Springhall, "Baden-Powell and the Boy Scout Movement."

<sup>40</sup> Canute, "How it feels to be scalped," *The Raven* (Sep 1908), Scout Association Archives, TSA/PER/100/1, p.5.

of boys in the London suburbs.<sup>41</sup> Stories such as these demonstrate that these boys read and disseminated texts from popular literature at the time. Furthermore, this example shows that through their Scouting activities, these boys reflected imaginations of ‘colonial’ peoples that were widespread throughout Victorian and Edwardian society and literature. Adventure tales and imperial romances existed long before the Scouting Movement. This example shows that specific content to which boys were exposed appeared in their homemade community magazines. These influences, along with Baden-Powell’s lessons and structures, helped determine how youth engaged with the Scouting Movement.

Likewise, in 1909, Scout Godfrey Himus recorded being unimpressed with German Scouts at a large, international camp. He wrote in his diary that after welcoming some fellow Scouts from Salisbury into their camp that he “saw some of the German Scouts” who had “no proper camp fire” and “slept round (*sic*) the camp fire made above the old one.”<sup>42</sup> While Baden-Powell professed that Scouting would create a united youth brotherhood that would influence national politics, national divides remained.<sup>43</sup> Likewise, Himus’s comment was written at a time when anti-German sentiment was thought to be prevalent throughout Britain, and suggests that he may have reflected aspects of the nation’s popular and political mood.<sup>44</sup> Himus’s criticism of the German Scouts points toward a perceived sense of supremacy in the Scouting ranks, with Britons taking the top position. Racist language was also used in a coast watching diary by a Sea Scout named A. Clayton. He referred to his burnt dinner as “nigger-minstrel pie (well blackened),” which suggests that regardless of *Scouting for Boys*’ ennoblement of certain African groups and customs, casually perpetrated dehumanisation of

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<sup>41</sup> “A Man who was scalped: Reminiscences of a fight with Black Kettle’s Band. One of Custer’s soldiers tells a graphic story of a fight with the Indians and how he was mutilated,” *New York Times*, 26 December 1883.

<sup>42</sup> Godfrey Himus, “9 August 1909,” *Boy Scout Camp Diary*, Scout Association Archives, TC/85.

<sup>43</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, *Young Knights of the Empire: Their Code and Further Scout Yarns* (1916), Project Gutenberg, 2003, pp. 22-24.

<sup>44</sup> For a key work, see Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise of Anglo-German Antagonism, 1860-1914* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1982). For a more recent study that challenges these assumptions on Britain’s anti-German mood, see Richard Scully, *British Images of Germany: admiration, antagonism, & ambivalence, 1860-1914* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012).

non-white and colonized peoples was engrained in this boy's mind.<sup>45</sup> That Scouting was touted as a cure for all the world's troubles, yet outlined through 'British values' reinforces Edward Said's argument that Scout activities reinforced British Imperial domination: "we should not be mistaken about these boyish pleasures" because "they do not contradict the overall political purpose of British control over India and Britain's other overseas dominions."<sup>46</sup> This subconscious supremacy of which Said spoke was evident in these two Scout's personal writings and was reinforced by their Scouting activities. A 1912 *Sunday Times* article shows that Baden-Powell asserted "the Scouting Movement was doing more to bring Boers and Britons together than any other movement in that country" was largely assuming individual participation in the process.<sup>47</sup> However, as journal entries from boys like Himus and Clayton suggest, the boys may not have viewed the unification of races and nationalities as part of their personal Scouting role.

Using Scout testimonies as sources is also necessary to gauge how and in what ways they differed from Baden-Powell and his official narrative and plan for the Movement. While many boys sympathised with Baden-Powell's patriotic ideology, engaged in civic responsibilities, and joined the military to serve their county, they did not demonstrate the same Scouting brotherhood with non-British Scouts as Baden-Powell professed to encourage. In fact, their journals often reflected racist and supremacist attitudes indicative of their time. The existence of Orientalist portrayals of non-white peoples or jeering comments made towards Europeans in these Scout journals highlights that while Baden-Powell and various press and literary outlets professed that a community of Scouting would help bring peace to the world, old patriotisms and nationalist connections remained.

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<sup>45</sup> A. Clayton, *Hope Cove Sea Scouts*, 25 August 1915, Scout Association Archives.

<sup>46</sup> Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994), p. 166.

<sup>47</sup> "Boy Scouts' Parade," *Sunday Times*, October 13 1912, p. 9.

Timothy Parsons observes that Baden-Powell derived much of his foundation for the Boy Scouts from his time spent fighting wars in Asia and Africa.<sup>48</sup> Baden-Powell used ‘African’ inspired images and appropriated customs to inspire masculine self-sufficiency and promote physical health in boys, two traits he believed lacked in modern Britain that survived in ‘simple’ peoples in Africa. The language and attitude Baden-Powell had towards these non-white peoples, however, was not of equality, but that of selective reverence. He believed them to be backwards and static peoples in terms of political, economic, technological, and philosophical development who had a few specific, more primal qualities that could be adopted by Westerners, such as the ability to survive in the wilderness. Scouting activities reinforced and reflected social perceptions of non-white peoples, as did individual writings and testimonies.

Regardless of Baden-Powell’s idealistic rhetoric about creating a Movement and international brotherhood where old differences based on nationality, class, race, and religion were trumped by a unified Scouting identity, old barriers remained. Baden-Powell himself, however, as the next chapter will later show, may have presented certain positive qualities in non-British peoples, they were largely viewed as inferior. With the war looming, it was clear that Scouting’s contradictory message of universal Scoutship and nationalist patriotism would not only fail to prevent international conflict, but encouraged the participation of youth sympathetic to Baden-Powell’s ideology. Through actions of civic defence, we can often see how those involved in the Movement and how Headquarters pitted Scouts against other elements in society. During the war, boys not only represented the Scouting Movement, but the political authority of the state. Their parades and patriotic demonstrations, as chapter five will demonstrate, evolved from mere nationalistic ideology to real participation in Britain’s war effort.

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<sup>48</sup> See Parsons *Race, Resistance, and the Boy Scout Movement* and “Een-Gonyama Gonyama!”

As this thesis's main objective is to place the boys' participation in their communities at the focus, we must also view the youth organisation within the broader scope of citizenship and nationhood. Doing so will not only provide a better insight into the experience of early Scouting, but will demonstrate how my research into the history of the Movement speaks to a wider academic audience by providing access to the earliest stages of individual and collective participation in the active political process. This thesis defines 'citizenship' broadly as the active involvement and participation in one's community. Examining the Scouting Movement, however, especially individual testimonies, reveals examples of how young Edwardians engaged in citizenship through deliberate action and community participation. Hugh Cunningham as well, in his influential study on the British Volunteer Force, notes that participation in national service required more from people than abstract patriotism.<sup>49</sup> As I demonstrate in chapter five, Scout Alexander Fisher's steadfast attempts to be taken seriously by the adult establishment in his community through his Scouting efforts exemplifies David Held's assertion that "citizenship involves the struggle for membership and participation."<sup>50</sup> The sources I present in this thesis demonstrate that Scouts actively participated in their communities in a capacity that was often equal to their adult counterparts. Likewise, community to these boys was not isolated exclusively to the towns in which they grew up, but the wider nation as well. This thesis will demonstrate that Scouts did act at the local level, yet did so with the understanding that their actions impacted Britain as a whole.

Furthermore, these individual Scout sources show that these boys understood their individual and social participation in citizenship in a manner that emphasised national service. As I demonstrate in the final two chapters of this thesis, many Scouts linked their

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<sup>49</sup> Hugh Cunningham, *The Volunteer Force: A Social and Political history, 1859-1908* (London: Croom Helm, 1975), pp. 3-4.

<sup>50</sup> David Held, "Between State and Civil Society: Citizenship," *Citizenship*, ed. by Geoff Andrews (London: Lawrence & Wishart Limited, 1991), p. 20.

associations with civic responsibility with the military and service at home during the First World War. As Nicoletta F. Gullace states the war offered women a moment to “renegotiate conceptions of citizenship” through national service, so too did Scouting allow boys too young for combat the opportunity to contribute to their nation and participate in citizenship.<sup>51</sup> The testimonies I present in this thesis demonstrate that, to these boys, citizenship meant service and active participation in local and wider national communities.

As Jose Harris rightly indicates that Edwardian Britain was a “ramshackle and amorphous society” in which peoples’ understanding and reflections of ‘citizenship’ varied, my research into Scout testimonies reflect individual relationships civic-minded youth had with broader civil and state institutions.<sup>52</sup> That the Boy Scouts resisted official militarisation at the institutional level, yet saw many of its members voluntarily take up military training, coast watching, and city policing demonstrates an active level of national responsibility on the part of Scouting youth. We see in Scouting, therefore, a tension between the ‘civil society’ and the state, which reflected the Movement’s ideologically individualist foundations, as well as a tension between the Scouting institution and its members.<sup>53</sup>

Examining how boys and young men interwove their Scouting experience with expectations of civic service allows us an insight into how enthusiastic members of Britain’s largest youth organisation exercised their understanding of citizenship. As I demonstrate in the final two chapters of this thesis, these Scout records demonstrate that boys viewed their participation in the Movement within a framework of citizenship, civic responsibility, and national service, yet did so in a way that fit into their lives and agendas.

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<sup>51</sup> Nicoletta F. Gullace, *“The Blood of Our Sons:” Men, Women, and the Renegotiation of British Citizenship During the Great War* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002), pp. 3-4.

<sup>52</sup> Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit*, p. 3.

<sup>53</sup> Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit*, p. 181. See also Geogg Mulgan, “Citizens and Responsibilities,” *Citizenship*, ed. by Geoff Andrews (London: Lawrence & Wishart Limited, 1991), pp. 37-49 and Derek Heater, *Citizenship in Britain: A History* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), pp. 54-55.

Likewise, the Scouting Movement provides us with useful examples where individual Britons engaged consciously with aspects of imperial culture in their everyday lives. The political, economic, and military impact of ‘imperialism’ in the lives of everyday citizen in Britain has been the subject of great historical debate and has generated fruitful and wide-ranging scholarship in various fields of academic disciplines.<sup>54</sup> While some scholars, such as Bernard Porter, argue the majority of Britons did not think about the Empire or imperial issues in a conscious manner, the records of these boys indicate a strong level of active engagement with imperial culture.<sup>55</sup> This thesis examines people who were not working in the colonies or engaged directly with the function of imperial industries, but nevertheless indicated a conscious, personal connection with their Scouting Movement association and the broader imperial arena. Furthermore, the sources I present in my thesis not only show individuals working towards national service efforts, but reflecting an understanding of the politics and ideology of imperialism in their writings. These boys reinforced and amplified imperial culture in British communities through their efforts with Scouting.

The link between citizenship and Britain’s imperial influence on average people can be understood by looking at concepts of agency. This thesis is primarily concerned with the early Scouts’ intentional and deliberate construction of their Scouting identity, based around the ways in which they operated their local troops and how they viewed themselves within

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<sup>54</sup> Please see this wide, yet by no means complete literature on the social impact of imperialism and its recognition by the public: *Imperialism and Popular Culture*, ed. by John MacKenzie (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986); John MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The manipulation of British public opinion, 1880-1960* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1986); Antoinette Burton, “Who needs the nation?: Interrogation ‘British’ history,” *Cultures of Empire, A Reader: Colonizers in Britain and the Empire in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. by Catherine Hall (New York: Routledge, 2000); Catherine Hall, *Civilizing Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830-1867* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002); Bernard Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialist: Empire, Society, and Culture in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Andrew Thompson, *The Empire Strikes Back?: the impact of imperialism on Britain from the mid-nineteenth century* (London: Pearson Longman, 2005); John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-System, 1830-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); *Britain’s Experience of Empire in the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Andrew Thompson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Christopher Prior, *Exporting empire: Africa, Colonial Officials and the Construction of the British Imperial State, c. 1900-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013); and *Writing Imperial Histories*, ed. by Andrew Thompson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013).

<sup>55</sup> Porter, *Absent-Minded Imperialist*, p. 3.

the wider nation. While there is a rich and ongoing debate on the more theoretical aspects of ‘agency’, which concerns humans and non-humans alike, this thesis uses the concept to understand individual’s freewill, conscience appropriation of outside influences, and action.<sup>56</sup> This approach will allow me to demonstrate how individuals contributed to their nation through their understandings of citizenship. I understand Scouts’ agency in their actions as well as their intentional efforts to reflect a Scouting image to their communities.

While political, social, and cultural influences affect the ways in which people respond to their environment, people are still agents in their own experience. As the next chapter will demonstrate, Scouts were subjected to a variety of influences: literary, social, familiar, and education. What is most important to this study, however, is how these boys adopted and appropriated environmental conditions and cultivated a youth-led movement in a construction of their own design. The early Scouts and their local troop development exemplify Walter Johnson’s position that “the specific political and cultural contexts of [peoples’] actions are less important than the fact that they are actions *per se*.”<sup>57</sup> This thesis understands the boys’ agency through their actions. By developing activities, training programmes, curriculum, and systems of operation, early Scouts initiated a Movement based on the encouragement of a popular figure, yet did so through their own efforts and through their respective understandings of broader political and social issues.

Likewise, as I will examine in greater detail in the final two chapters of this thesis, it is the aspiration of many boys to mould themselves and their troops around an ideal Scout archetype that suggests many viewed themselves as ‘hyper citizens’. In his examination of French soldiers’ experience of the First World War, Leonard Smith notes that “narratives and

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<sup>56</sup> Julia Adams, “1-800-How-Am-I-Driving? Agency in Social Science History,” *Social Science History*, 35.1 (2011). For more on the academic debate concerning historical approaches to ‘agency’, also see David Gary Shaw, “Happy in our Chains?: Agency and Language in the Postmodern Age,” *History and Theory*, 40 (2001), Walter Johnson, “On Agency,” *Journal of Social History*, 37.1 (2003), Chris Pearson, “Between Instinct and Intelligence: Harnessing Police Dog Agency in Early Twentieth-Century Paris,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 58.2 (2016), and Lynn M. Thomas, “Historicising Agency,” *Gender and History*, 28.2 (2016).

<sup>57</sup> W. Johnson, “On Agency,” p. 115.



narrators create each other” and that “firsthand (*sic*) testimonies share a common goal of constructing ‘the embattled self,’ an identity as well as a text.”<sup>58</sup> As soldiers’ often framed their individual experience with the broader narrative of the war, we can see that Scouts developed their individual Scout identities simultaneously with a Scouting narrative of citizenship that existed throughout the country. As chapter five will show, tales of Scout heroics permeated Scout literature and newspaper reports, creating the grand narrative of a brave Scout identity to which boys attempted to emulate. The records I use in this thesis demonstrate that boys developed the Movement through their own initiative, yet did so with the knowledge that Scouts were meant to conduct themselves in a certain way. They were instructed to contribute to their communities more than their peers and to uphold the dignity of the Movement.

### **Conclusion:**

Adding Scout testimonies to our understanding of the Movement is not only beneficial to the historian of Scouting and Edwardian Britain, but necessary to gain a better understanding of the ways in which individuals grappled with wider social and national issues of their time.

While my thesis relies heavily of the work and research conducted by the above named scholars, my work is guided as much as possible by the recorded experience of the boys themselves. By doing so, I connect the rich literature concerning Baden-Powell; Scouting’s ideological and social foundations; Edwardian Britain’s wider imperial and martial culture with the individuals’ response and reactions as realised in their association with a pro-active, civic based movement. The historiography and theoretical influences of this thesis are a reflection of the primary sources I used in conducting this study. As peoples’ lives and

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<sup>58</sup> Leonard Smith, *The Embattled Self: French Soldiers’ Testimony of the Great War* (London: Cornell University Press, 2007), pp. 7-8.

experiences are developments of multiple and interconnected processes, I rely on a variety of theories and approaches to analyse the ways these boys navigated politics and nationalism through Scouting. This thesis not only demonstrates the importance of examining individual experience had on the Scouting Movement, but how we can use records of peoples' testimonies to better understand the ways in which historical actors engaged with citizenship and incorporated broad ideas of nationalism and politics into their communal associations and public lives.

The Scouting Movement itself arose as a reaction to Edwardian fears of about the future of Britain's imperial and global dominance, economic prosperity, and indeed social stability. John Springhall observes that "imperialism, social Darwinism, the cult of national efficiency and certain fashionable attitude towards social reform are among the intellectual currents which all found their way into the influential Scouting ideology of the pre-1914 phase."<sup>59</sup> He also argued that "Scouting was viewed by the Chief Scout and his most loyal supporters primarily as a form of moral and physical training to prevent national decadence."<sup>60</sup> Springhall's observations reflect a wide range of scholarship that places Scouting's origins within the broader context of Edwardian anxiety.<sup>61</sup> Youth culture and development were at the centre of these concerns. My research and the sources used in this thesis will place the boys in the conversation regarding Scouting's social influences and demonstrate the ways in which they participated in the wider national, communal, and ideological arenas. This period in Britain was dominated by concerns over the health and wellbeing of youth. I argue that Scouting reinforced and exploited ideas, schemes, and sentiments to which youth would have been exposed and sympathetic. Before addressing

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<sup>59</sup> Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society*, p. 59.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> See Warren, "Baden-Powell, Scout Movement and Citizen Training;" Robert H. MacDonald, *Sons of the Empire*; Sam Pryke, "The Popularity of Nationalism in the Early British Boy Scout Movement," *Social History*, 23.3 (Oct., 1998), pp. 309-324; Parsons, "'Een-Gonyama Gonyama," pp. 57-66; and Sarah Mills, "Scouting for Girls?," pp. 537-556 for a wide, yet by no means complete historiography of Scouting and Edwardian anxiety.

Baden-Powell's scheme for the Scouting Movement, it is necessary to highlight contemporary efforts in order to demonstrate that Scouting did not originate in a vacuum. Edwardian youth themselves were already exposed to initiatives designed to promote values, skills, and ideology found in the Movement. The following chapter will highlight the issue of youth advocacy in Britain during the Victorian and Edwardian eras.

## **Chapter II: Education and Background to the Boy Scout Movement**

This chapter will examine the history and background of Scouting. Likewise, this chapter will also analyse the social conditions and educational initiatives through which the Movement emerged. It will also provide a background on the Scouting Movement's official foundation at the top levels. By examining the motivations for the Scouting Movement's origins and official structure at the onset of the thesis, the main body chapters can be focused on the testimonies and records of the Scouts at the local level, rather than on Baden-Powell or other adult leaders. While Baden-Powell founded the Boy Scouts, it was the individuals on the ground that developed the Movement, founded troops, and enacted curriculum. Next, this chapter will examine Victorian and Edwardian youth education initiatives in order to provide a background to the social atmosphere that led to Scouting's inception. Finally, this chapter will analyse Baden-Powell, his texts, and the practical foundation of the Scouting Movement. Looking at the founder's vision for the Movement at the beginning of the thesis will allow me to establish how Scouting was meant to function in Baden-Powell's mind and how boys and local figures adopted, adapted, and differed from the official narrative.

This chapter is divided into two main sections. First, this chapter will examine social and educational initiatives that existed during the Victorian and Edwardian periods. Doing so will demonstrate that Scouting did not emerge in a vacuum and that boys would have been exposed to similar ideas and socially-motivated education efforts before their time in the Movement began. Second, this chapter will explore the practical elements of the Boy Scouts, as well as its founder, Robert Baden-Powell. Highlighting the fundamental aspects of the Movement at this stage will provide a historical context and allow the remaining chapters to focus on the individuals and their testimonies without the Movement's founder taking centre stage.

## What to do with the youth: Victorian and Edwardian Youth Initiatives

The Scouting Movement was conceived by Baden-Powell, yet many social initiatives existed during the late-Victorian and Edwardian periods that directed efforts towards youth improvement. Since the late nineteenth century, social thinkers and philanthropists attempted to help youth they felt were susceptible to moral degeneration, poverty, and poor health. “Boys experts,” according to Rosenthal, “grew up everywhere, devoting themselves to studying the plight of the lower-middle-class and working-class lad” and “became an almost distinct subgenre of early twentieth-century social criticism.”<sup>62</sup> Before looking at the specifics of the Scouting Movement, its official foundation, and the lived experience of those who participated, it is necessary to look at some of these ideas in order to get a sense of how prominent thinkers viewed youth issues. The Movement grew out of anxieties and the desire to improve the moral and physical character of boys. As such, it is imperative to place Scouting within the broad spectrum of youth initiatives.

In an edition of collected essays entitled *Studies of Boy Life in our Cities* (1904), editor and professor of social philosophy and economics, Edward Johns Urwick wrote that “clearly marked differences between the city clerk, the skilled artisan, the factory hand, the unskilled day labourer, the casual man of odd jobs, the loafer who does nothing, and the rogue who does worse than nothing” were evident in people during adulthood, but were less developed or “obvious” in boyhood.<sup>63</sup> He claimed that because boys from low-income families often left school at fourteen in order to assist with family finances, they were more susceptible to social and cultural evils. Urwick’s following comments on his perceptions of working-class

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<sup>62</sup> Rosenthal, *Character Factory*, p. 89.

<sup>63</sup> Edward Johns Urwick, “Introduction,” *Studies of Boy Life in our Cities*, ed by Edward Johns Urwick (London: J. M. Dent & Company, 1904), p. vii.

boys' behavioural traits exemplified many social thinkers' viewpoint on the problems of degeneration facing youth:

smoking daily an unwholesome number of cheap and nasty 'fags,' acquiring with painful pertinacity the habit of expectoration, which he will retain as an unpleasant peculiarity to the end of his life, and adding to his vocabulary the wealth of coarse and profane expletives which defile all his ordinary conversation with his mates.<sup>64</sup>

"For his literature, if he has any," Urwick continued, the lower class boy "chooses the halfpenny 'comic,' or the still more insidious penny 'blood'."<sup>65</sup> The typical boy in this 'class' of people about whom Urwick was speaking spent his weekend leisure time at music halls until the early hours of the next morning "probably with a girl; for it is regarded as only right that any boy over the age of fifteen should have one girl to whom his is supposed to be attached, and should take a lively interest in any others he may happen to meet."<sup>66</sup> The elitist class tones in these statements are obvious, as are generalisations of working-class culture during this period.<sup>67</sup> Significantly for this thesis, Urwick's sentiments are also rooted in the assumption that cultural and environmental conditions of urban British spaces had a dire impact on those who lived there. These ideas of working-class degeneration predate the Edwardian period by several decades. As Judith Walkowitz's research demonstrates, the "middle-class reading public became emotionally invested in a set of representations about the poor" thanks to the work of Charles Booth and other Victorians.<sup>68</sup> Reports of the health conditions of the working classes during the South African War, however, encouraged people to view poverty and poor health as threats to national security, and to direct greater efforts

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid, p. xii.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, pp. xii-xiii.

<sup>67</sup> Jonathan Rose's seminal work, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (London: Yale University Press, 2001) demonstrates working men and women's reading and learning habits were much deeper and wide-ranging than men like Urwick claimed.

<sup>68</sup> Judith Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (London: Virago, 1992), p. 30.

towards youth.<sup>69</sup> Exemplifying Walkowitz's criticism of Victorian middle-class observers, Urwick all but stripped those he wrote about of their agency and regarded them as beings driven solely by their base instincts to get intoxicated, to be entertained, and to have sex.<sup>70</sup> Emerging in part as an attempt to reverse the perceived behaviour traits that people like Urwick observed, the Scouting Movement encouraged health and ingenuity by promoting self-reliance in the boys themselves.

While Urwick was certainly not alone in his perceptions of working-class depravity, there were other social thinkers, particularly those affiliated with the newly emerged Labour Party (est. 1900), who pushed efforts to promote health and civic responsibility among youth, yet took a less condemning tone, while restoring agency to the boys themselves. The anthropologist and writer Arnold Freeman, for example, in his much referenced work *Boy Life and Labour* (1914) relied more heavily on early sociological and psychological understandings of youth behaviour. Developing the term 'adolescence,' Freeman identified the ages fourteen to twenty four as the time when "social and industrial conditions" have the greatest impact on a boys' behaviour and health.<sup>71</sup> He argued that the only way to achieve a meaningful, positive impact on the development of youth was to understand their environmental conditions and work with them in a manner that appealed to their behaviour.<sup>72</sup> If a boy at this age was exposed to an "environment prejudicial to growth, the resultant harm" would have a much greater impact on him than someone younger or older.<sup>73</sup> Freeman, like many thinkers during the Edwardian Period, believed the problems affecting youth were at a tipping point. He called for drastic educational reform to be financed through both public and philanthropic initiatives. How he differed from Urwick, however, is that Freeman looked at individual boys themselves and attempted to create a 'representative figure' from his

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<sup>69</sup> Rosenthal, *Character Factory*, pp. 88-107.

<sup>70</sup> Walkowitz, *Dreadful Delight*, p. 30.

<sup>71</sup> Arnold Freeman, *Life and Labour* (London: P. S. King & Son, 1914), pp. 93 and 96.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*, p. 93.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid*, p. 96.

conclusions. This is significant in that boys' individuality was a key component of his research, rather than conclusions based on presupposed ideas and broad observation. As an active member of the Labour Party and one-time candidate, Freeman's study attempted to promote political and sociological change. The Scouting Movement coincided with other Edwardian efforts, highlighting its position as one of many efforts that attempted youth development. Boys would have been subjected to ideas of self-discipline and civic responsibility from many aspects of life, not only through their association with the Scouting Movement.

Likewise, the Victorian sociologist and writer Charles Russell attempted to understand how large social conditions affected youth by examining the lived experience of his subjects. In his work *Manchester Boys: Sketches of Manchester Lads at Work and Play* (1905), Russell highlighted social and cultural problems he believed faced boys during the Edwardian period. Like Freeman, Russell targeted predominately working-class boys' living conditions and proposed ideas that could have a political impact. Russell endorsed the belief that frivolous pursuits of entertainment, such as music halls distracted a boy "from his duty" and that a "rougher class of lads" were more likely than others to spend their time seeking thrills.<sup>74</sup> Vocational training, Russell argued, was the best way for a boy to lift himself out of the cycle of vice and poverty. He was critical of Army service as well, arguing that it did little to provide young men with practical, job training for life after discharge.<sup>75</sup> Russell called for political action to help boys train and achieve opportunities for career development, for able bodied individuals as well as those suffering from physical disabilities.<sup>76</sup> What we can see in Russell's text is an attempt to shield vulnerable boys from perceived dangers brought about by urbanisation and poverty and give them the means to provide themselves with the capacity

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<sup>74</sup> Charles E. B. Russell, *Manchester Boys: Sketches of Manchester Lads at Work and Play* (Manchester: Neil Richardson, 1984), p. 25.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, pp.7-9.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, p. 42.



to earn a wage through skilled labour. Linking these ideas with Scouting's efforts, we can see a broader attempt to teach boys vocational skills and abilities that they could use in adulthood to contribute to their communities and the nation as a whole.

Baden-Powell's pre-Scouting texts, as well as his explicit Scout literature, speeches, and his autobiography will all be examined in later sections to draw parallels between Baden-Powell's official ethos and the boys' reception of the official narrative. These studies demonstrated several key points that are significant to contextualise the environment from which Scouting emerged and the ideas that coexisted with it. First, is that many social thinkers believed the poorer classes were susceptible to vice and degeneration due to urban conditions, choice of entertainment, and poor literary preferences. Second, many thinkers promoted policies and programmes to give boys opportunities at practical vocational training, as well as instil in them the ability to help themselves. Self-reliance and personal accountability were seen as key factors in creating a healthy class of adolescents and young adults. Furthermore, these approaches also highlight the importance of targeting youth issues at the local level, in a manner to which boys could relate. Scouting itself, while a nation-wide call to action, was initially carried out at the local level. It reinforced ideas of self-reliance from the very onset by placing the task of troop formation on the boys themselves. Scouting was one of many initiatives and organisations at the time responding to the perceived need to combat apathy, vice, and degeneration in youth. It incorporated many of the ideas proposed by people like Freeman and Russell and mirrored well-established groups like the Boys' Brigade in structure. With this culture of youth education in mind, this thesis will now briefly examine other popular organisations at the time in order to demonstrate that boys were already exposed to ideologies and programmes of nationalism and civic responsibility, as well as military structures before Scouting was introduced in 1908. Doing so will allow us to

view Scouting as a product of broader Edwardian efforts to reform young people as well as an effect of popular nationalist and imperial culture.

John Springhall identifies a youth movement or organisation “by its willingness to admit unlimited numbers of children, adolescents, and young adults, with the aim of propagating some sort of code of living,” while also providing its members with the opportunities to achieve merit and positions of leadership.<sup>77</sup> Using this definition will make it possible to draw distinctions between Scouting, as well as other national organisations, and political initiatives or programmes designed to target isolated geographies or demographics. This thesis tests how far Springhall’s definition applies to Scouting, and argues that young boys were not simply “admitted” to the organisation, but instead were active agents in defining and reefing the Movement from the ground up. The boys’ testimony and records used in my thesis emphasise the importance of a personal Scouting identity. As chapter five will demonstrate, public presence and troop image were important to the boys writing about their Scouting experience. These boys drew from the culture of youth development highlighted above and propelled the Movement on the ground level and carved out a personal Scout identity for themselves and their troops.

Scouting was one of many initiatives aimed at encouraging citizenship, health, and patriotism in youth. Given that Baden-Powell and Scouting were not alone in their endeavours to combat perceived dangers, it is necessary to analyse the national and cultural scope of youth movements and organisations. Why Scouting became the most popular organisation has been the subject of some debate among scholars. Sam Pryke notes, in part through the use of oral histories from former Scouts, the importance autonomy played in the Scouting Movement’s success.<sup>78</sup> Pryke asserts freedom of activity and the curriculum were more appealing to potential Scouts than the regimental style of the Boys’ Brigade for

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<sup>77</sup> Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society*, p. 13.

<sup>78</sup> Pryke, “Popularity of Nationalism,” pp. 318-323.

example. However, as this thesis will demonstrate in chapters five and six, Scouts did indeed develop militaristic drill and push a nationalistic curriculum in their own troops. Autonomy and self-reliance were key attractions of the Movement as well as bedrocks to its ideological makeup, but the same individualism that encouraged boys to earn their own funds for example, allowed them to develop rifle training programmes as part of their war contribution. This thesis shares Pryke's opinion that Scouting's individualist nature was perhaps a more appealing aspect to many boys compared to the Cadets, Territorials, or the Church Lads Brigade, yet I argue the Movement's inherent nationalism and military glorification was a larger drawing factor than Pryke has insisted.<sup>79</sup> Boys used the Scouting Movement as a mechanism to express their own understandings of society, whereas other groups offered boys a standard of operations to which they would have to adhere. Given that Scouts and Scouting shared traits and members with other groups, this thesis is not concerned with weighing in on why boys found Scouting more appealing than other groups, but is instead interested in examining experienced and expressed broader social issues through their military-styled and civic-minded organisations. Because Scouting was youth driven, however, it was crafted through their agency, not the other way around.

The Boys' Brigade and the Cadet Force in particular need to be addressed, given their repeated appearance not only in the life of Baden-Powell—he was a member of the Cadet Force as a boy and appointed vice president of the Brigade in 1903—but in many Boy Scouts' personal records. The Boys' Brigade was established in Glasgow by William Alexander Smith in 1883 to combat the same issues of poverty, vice, and degeneration mentioned in the previous section.<sup>80</sup> The Brigade was organised on a strong military

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid, pp. 318-324." See also the debate over militarism between Allen Warren and John Springhall: Warren, "Baden-Powell, Scout Movement, and Citizen Training," and Springhall, "Baden-Powell and the Boy Scout Movement."

<sup>80</sup> See Donald McFarlan, *First for Boys: The Story of the Boys' Brigade, 1883-1983* (Glasgow: Collins, 1982) and John Springhall, Brian Fraser, and Michael Hoare, *Sure and Steadfast: A History of the Boys' Brigade, 1883-1983* (Glasgow: Collins, 1983) for broader histories of the Boys' Brigade.

framework, relying on the dual instruments of military drill and Christianity to promote civic-duty and moral uprightness in its members.<sup>81</sup> While the Brigade recruited working-class boys, Joanna Bourke has demonstrated these boys were a clear minority; less than one percent of Glaswegian boys who enrolled between 1890 and 1895 had ‘unskilled’ fathers.<sup>82</sup> Again, like Scouting, the Brigade was one of many Victorian/Edwardian efforts that promoted healthy activity and education to youth. Unlike Scouting, however, the Brigade was structured from the top and did not give the participating boys the opportunity to form the organisation around their own expectations. Hence, the case for a grassroots perspective of the boys’ experience is enhanced by this structural novelty of Scouting.

Likewise, the Army Cadet Force became a popular organisation for boys during this time. While it existed in various forms since the mid-nineteenth century, the late Victorian period saw the organisation open up to non-public school boys in an extra-curricular fashion.<sup>83</sup> The Cadets offered boys a scheme of direct and official military training and experienced surges in enrolment during perceived instances of national danger. While Baden-Powell successfully resisted attempts by military officials to merge the Boy Scouts with the Cadets before and during the First World War in an official capacity, many Scouts did have dual associations. In a community magazine from the 52<sup>nd</sup> North London Troop for example, a Scout referred to as Corporal G. D. Nokes was congratulated on his “promotion to Company Sergeant Major in the Stationers’ School Cadet Corps.”<sup>84</sup> Citing the compatibility with training this boy received in the Scouts, the anonymous author insisted that “this is an additional testimony to the thoroughness of the training of the 52<sup>nd</sup>, and we hope he will be

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<sup>81</sup> Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society*, p. 24.

<sup>82</sup> Joanna Bourke, *Working-Class Cultures in Britain, 1890-1960: Gender, class and ethnicity* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 148.

<sup>83</sup> Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society*, pp. 71-72.

<sup>84</sup> 52<sup>nd</sup> North London Troop Magazine (1916), Scout Association Archives, 57<sup>th</sup>/52<sup>nd</sup> N. London Troop, no. 203, p. 4.

successful both in his corps, and with his patrol.”<sup>85</sup> At this stage it is important to note the crossover between these youth organisations, given that wartime efforts and military training in the Scouts is the subject of later chapters. Regardless of Baden-Powell’s resistance to any suggestions to merge the Scouts directly with Cadet Corps, many boys took it upon themselves to link their associations. Given that groups like the Boys’ Brigade and its offshoot, the more pacifist Boys’ Life Brigade each originated through similar efforts to develop boys’ moral and physical health, it is no surprise boys would be attracted to multiple groups.<sup>86</sup>

Cooperation between the Boy Scout troop and the Boys’ Brigade not only reflected an ideological similarity between the groups, but also suggests a shared social and cultural milieu. Like the Scouting Movement, the Boys’ Brigade was comprised largely of boys who could afford to pay participation costs, regardless of its development for working-class boys in Glasgow: uniforms, accessories, travel, and time of work were often unfeasible aspects of youth organisations.<sup>87</sup> What is most significant, therefore, is that Scouting was one of multiple ways in which Edwardian boys could engage with citizenship in an organised manner. The mode in which boys chose to express their patriotism or national contribution, whether it was through Scouting, the Boys’ Brigade, Army Cadet Force, or Church Lads’ Brigade, was less significant than the militaristic zeitgeist to which so many boys contributed. That these boys worked together towards a common goal, indicates that many middle-class Edwardian youth were indeed enthusiastic about national service and civic responsibility, yet chose to participate through different, yet not ideologically dissimilar, movements and institutions. Baden-Powell himself was involved in different organisations before founding

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> See Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society*, pp. 22-31 and 71-74 for more detailed analysis of the origins of the respective organisations.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, pp. 22-29.

the Boy Scouts. This thesis will now examine Baden-Powell and his ideological foundations that encouraged the creation of the Movement.

### **Baden-Powell's solution to Edwardian Anxieties**

While socio-economic observations and proposed solutions at the time were varied, Baden-Powell believed that environmental conditions of poverty, urbanisation, and vice all contributed to a weakened youth population. The emergence of youth organisations and social commentaries in the late nineteenth century reflected widespread social concerns over the population's physical and moral health, national efficiency in the global economy, and the stability of the Empire. Furthermore, social commentators and workers at the time believed attacking these problems in youth was the most effective way to fix societies' problems. Of these groups and initiatives, the Boy Scouts has perhaps received the most academic and popular attention. There are several reasons for this. First it was founded by the charismatic Robert Baden-Powell, who was in 1907 already a household name for his military actions in Africa, the most notable of which was his defence of Mafeking (13 Oct 1899 – 17 May 1900) during the South African War (1899-1902).<sup>88</sup> After the war Baden-Powell embarked on a far-reaching tour around Britain, during which he spoke at schools, youth organisation meetings, and public events about his military participation in the colonies and how young people could contribute to their communities and nation. The second reason for the attention paid to Scouting is the immense popularity of the Movement from the very beginning of its foundation. In 1910, just two years after its founding, a reported 107,000 boys were affiliated with Scouting, compared to long-established Brigades' 68,000 in the same year.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Elleke Boehmer, "Introduction," *Scouting for Boys: The Original 1908 Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. xvii.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, p. xii and Spinghall, *Youth, Empire and Society*, p. 138.

Baden-Powell incorporated previously existing ideas and organisations' structures and the youth publication template, as well as his celebrity to develop Scouting. How literature and textual dissemination played a part in the Movement's story will be covered shortly, however, it is necessary at this point to examine Baden-Powell and the practical development of his scheme. Because this thesis is an examination of the lived experience of the Scouting Movement by those on the ground level, Baden-Powell's biography will be brief and is principally meant to highlight the background on which boys' experience of the Movement was placed. As with the previously mentioned initiatives and ideas, the Boy Scouts were meant to combat larger concerns of national efficiency, the perceived 'softening' of Britain's youth due to urbanization and modernity, military and national preparedness: common fears held by the upper classes throughout Edwardian Britain. Sarah Mills observes that "the motivation for Scouting was largely due to fears over the future of the British nation and empire left in the hands of a 'lazy' and 'unhealthy' next generation of boys and men."<sup>90</sup> While Scouts rarely articulated Mill's argument in a direct manner in their records, they would have been exposed to such ideas in society and from official Scout sources. By providing Britain's youth with the ability to help themselves, Baden-Powell hoped to secure a prosperous future for the nation and Empire. This section will examine the ideology on which Baden-Powell based his teachings and the practical ways he encouraged the Movement.

Baden-Powell originally intended for Scouting to exist within established organisations, like the Boys' Brigade, Sunday schools, and the Young Man's Christian Association.<sup>91</sup> Once it became an independent movement, however, many boys left their previous institutions to join the Scouts. Alexander Fisher of Manchester, for example, stated that he was in the Boys' Life Brigade, but left due to ideological reasons and, as it seems

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<sup>90</sup> Mills, "Scouting for Girls?," p. 541.

<sup>91</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: Original 1908 Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 5.

from his diary, bullying from the other boys. He wrote “my first camp with the B.L.B. saw me put upon most cruelly by the other fellows, who soon found out my timidity, and during the whole period, I was the camp ‘dupe’.”<sup>92</sup> It was not until he found a place in the Scouting Movement that he was able to assert himself and became as a successful leader. While he had sympathies with the Brigade and initially found its principles appealing, it was the individualism offered by Scouting to which he most related.<sup>93</sup> Details and structure of the various groups led boys to one organisation or the other, not necessarily the similar values Scouting and the Brigade shared. While Fisher’s background and beliefs made him join organisations with like-minded people, the grass-roots nature of Scouting allowed him to use it as a mechanism through which he could forge his own experience.

Baden-Powell’s concerns for British youth were class-based and largely twofold. He believed Edwardian education left middle-class boys “able to read and write, well-behaved and amenable to discipline, and easily made into smart-looking parade soldiers—but without individuality or strength of character, utterly without resourcefulness, initiative or the guts for adventure.”<sup>94</sup> Working-class boys, however, were more susceptible to vice, such as gambling and drinking, or frivolous past times like football. Baden-Powell wrote that there was “plenty of money in the country to put everyone on a fair footing, if only it were made proper use of by the working man” and that his savings could be “doubled” if he gave up “drinking and smoking.”<sup>95</sup> In these beliefs, Baden-Powell largely echoed popular sentiment at the time, as indicated earlier. Furthermore, as Allen Warren notes, Baden-Powell “picked up and dropped social and political concerns as he went along,” yet believed many of the nation’s problems could be fixed with his own brand of drill-based education and character building

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<sup>92</sup> Alexander Fisher, *My Life*, Scout Association Archives, p. 7.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 7-11.

<sup>94</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, *Lessons from the Varsity of Life* (London: C. Arthur Pearson LTD., 1933), p. 272.

<sup>95</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys, Original 1908 Edition*, p. 243.



schemes.<sup>96</sup> Baden-Powell's military and personal celebrity not only led to the Movement's initial success, but this mind-set structured Scouting's formation along military lines in order to create a youth movement that would ensure the future success of the nation, a point which Warren underplays. The founder often wrote with great introspection about his own development throughout his life and how various people, events, and appointments shaped his character.

Given that character building was a crucial aspect in Baden-Powell's mission, his experiences serve as an insight into how his ideas concerning the nation and citizenship came to be. Furthermore, as Timothy Parsons notes, Baden-Powell's military postings in the colonies was where he was inspired and where he developed ideas for Scouting.<sup>97</sup> This thesis argues that the Movement was driven largely by the individual boys at the ground level, through their interpretation of Scouting text, linked with their own understanding of the society around them. Looking at Baden-Powell's background in imperial military service will illuminate the military structures and ideologies, and provide a measuring stick against which we can hold the Scout testimonies and experiences with the Scouting Movement.

Baden-Powell established himself as a military commander while serving in India and southeast Africa. He participated in colonial military campaigns in Zululand in 1888, the 1895 Asante expedition in the Gold Coast (present-day Ghana), and the 1896 Ndebele uprising in present-day Zimbabwe. It was during the South African War, however, where Baden-Powell rose to prominence in the pages of the British press.<sup>98</sup> Baden-Powell first received national recognition during the Siege of Mafeking (1899-1900). Outlasting the Boer forces during the 217 day siege of the British held South African town from 13 October 1899 to 17 May 1900 not only led to Baden-Powell's promotion from colonel to major-general, it also served as a preliminary testing ground for ideas and practices he later adopted into the

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<sup>96</sup> Warren, "Baden-Powell, Scout Movement and Citizen Training," p. 387.

<sup>97</sup> See Parsons, *Race, Resistance and the Boy Scout Movement* and "Een-Gonyama Gonyama!"

<sup>98</sup> Parsons, "Een-Gonyama Gonyama!", p. 59.

Scouting handbook. Elleke Boehmer writes of the siege that “it was his [Baden-Powell’s] ability to not only succeed, but to do so with nonchalance and a taste for fun—with a combination of fake barbed-wire defences and Sunday baby competitions—that turned him in the eyes of the British public into the very epitome of pluck and team spirit.”<sup>99</sup> Scouts would later reflect this in their own local activities. The 1<sup>st</sup> Edwardian Aston Troop, for example, participated in drills, wrestling, and games designed, according to their troop leader, to “get more smartness (*sic*) and capability” and “to make the Scouts of use in case the government calls upon them.”<sup>100</sup> Activities used by Baden-Powell to keep up moral and maintain training during the siege were carried into the Scouting Movement and recreated by individuals at the local level.

Baden-Powell’s image in popular consciousness transcended his new title of the “hero of Mafeking” to a defender of the British realm and Britishness at large. He often talked about the role boys played during the siege, stating in *Scouting for Boys* that the victory at Mafeking was owed in part to boys who were prepared and trained to defend the city.<sup>101</sup> In a highly romanticised and sanitised version of the war, Baden-Powell painted boys as heroes, which as Robert MacDonald observes, helped create a “sense of belonging” to boys.<sup>102</sup> Of course, the myth and reality of imperial warfare were often incompatible. As Sarah Duff’s research demonstrates, children and child soldiers suffered disproportionate brutalities during the Anglo-Boer War in battle and in the British concentration camps.<sup>103</sup> Scouts incorporated Baden-Powell’s blend of fun in the face of danger in the manner that Boehmer discusses.

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<sup>99</sup> Elleke Boehmer, ‘Introduction’, *Scouting for Boys: Original 1908 Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. xvii.

<sup>100</sup> R. Hollick, “Propositions for 1910,” “The 1<sup>st</sup> Edwardian (Aston) Troop of Boy Scouts,” *Birmingham Central Library*, MS 403612.

<sup>101</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: Original 1908 Edition*, p. 10.

<sup>102</sup> MacDonald, *Sons of Empire*, p. 126.

<sup>103</sup> Sarah Emily Duff, “Capture the Children”: Writing Children into the South African War, 1899-1902,” *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*, 7.3 (Fall 2014), pp. 355-376.

Baden-Powell's broader ideologies of self-reliance and British exceptionalism influenced Scouting, yet boys' activities at the local level amplified the Chief Scouts' designs.

Baden-Powell positioned himself as the paternal icon of the Movement he believed had the potential to change the world for the better. John Daly, who joined the Scouts in 1914 as part of his family's war effort, later echoed Baden-Powell's desire when he wrote in his memoirs that "I have seen in Africa and in the Far East how Scouting has helped to train self-reliant men who have learned the joy of unselfish service," while one Scout's mother wrote in 1909 that Baden-Powell was "a boy's ideal hero" and that the Movement "has already taken such a hold on British boys that one still wonders at the glorious possibilities it unfolds for the future."<sup>104</sup> The ideas expressed here are reflective of Baden-Powell's mythical public image, while also representative of fears and anxiety felt during this time. Furthermore, Daly's sentiment demonstrates how Scouts themselves contributed to Baden-Powell's myth. They were at once consumers and originators of the Movement. The Scouting Movement was seen by many as a cure for degeneration and apathy. The terminology used by the Scout's Mother not only gave praise to Baden-Powell, but it rejected competing values or trends she felt harmed society, the nation, and young peoples' moral development. In using the phrase "a boy's ideal hero," the Scout's Mother realised the imperial hero in Baden-Powell's image, linking the Empire and the nation with the social and domestic.

The Chief Scout wrote considerably during his lifetime, both in his pre-Scout career and up until his death in Kenya in 1941. His texts focused on so wide a variety of topics as military organisation, camping in the wilderness, and hunting wild pigs.<sup>105</sup> He inserted personal stories and anecdotes into many of his writings, from large texts like *Scouting for*

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<sup>104</sup> Bishop John Daly, "From Boy to Bishop...in Scouting," Scout Association Archives, "World War I, No. 118 (1982). A Scout's Mother, "Scouting for Boys," *The Raven* (May 1909), Scout Association Archives, TSA/PER/100/1, p. 108.

<sup>105</sup> See Robert Baden-Powell, *Pigsticking or Hoghunting* (1889) and *Rovering to Success* (1922).

*Boys* (1908) and *Lessons for the Varsity of Life* (1933), as well as shorter works like *Quick Training for War* (1914) and *Young Knights of the Empire* (1917). This “scrambled-together apparatus of parts, chapters, yarns, and sections” and the various formats through which he presented his ideas (books, speeches, and magazines), as Robert MacDonald notes, allowed Baden-Powell to reach wider audience.<sup>106</sup> While his commentary on politics and society were, in Allan Warren’s words, “simple-minded and inconsistent,” the broader message of self-reliance was consistently emphasised and buttressed by his prescriptions for how boys should conduct their lives.<sup>107</sup> For example, within the same text, Baden-Powell wrote that he did not advocate “training the lads in a military way,” but still insisted on the “Duties as Citizen-Soldier” which meant that a boy should “*shoot, and can drill and scout.*”<sup>108</sup> It was such political inconsistencies that have led scholars like MacDonald to call the Movement “both ‘progressive’ and reactionary, responding, on the one hand, to a number of liberal ideas in education and social theory and, on the other, to a wide range of conservative, imperialist, and militarist opinion,” while Paul Fussell refers to the textual representation of Scouting as “slightly archaic liberal.”<sup>109</sup> These comments highlight the tension between Baden-Powell’s grasp of political and social theory, as well as his tendency to root his solutions in formulas he experienced first-hand. Self-initiative, learned through drill and hard work, was always encouraged even as official political positions changed. As we shall see in chapter three, these tensions were reflected amongst the Scouts themselves.

Initially, local troops assembled with very little official organisation. After the first rally at Brownsea Island in August, 1907, Baden-Powell released *Scouting for Boys* in fortnightly, six-part editions in the following January. The series was published by Horace Cox, which was owned by Baden-Powell’s friend and long-time publishing partner C. Arthur

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<sup>106</sup> MacDonald, *Sons of Empire*, p. 128.

<sup>107</sup> Warren, “Baden-Powell, Scout Movement and Citizen Training,” p. 397.

<sup>108</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: Original 1908 Edition*, pp. 300 and 283.

<sup>109</sup> MacDonald, *Sons of Empire*, p. 26 and Paul Fussell, *The Boy Scout Handbook and other Observations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 6.

Pearson, and sold for 4d a copy.<sup>110</sup> Meant as indirect instruction, it was left to the youth of Britain to take up Baden-Powell's message of personal responsibility and form troops themselves. The more ambitious boys were encouraged to be 'instructors,' who would organise and teach the principles of Scouting to others in their local communities. Baden-Powell wrote that "I recommend the Instructor to begin with a Patrol of eight boys if possible, and when these have qualified as 'First-class Scouts' to select the best five or six to raise each a patrol of his own and instruct in under his (the Instructor's) supervision."<sup>111</sup> This instruction, however, was meant to be carried out by the boys, as no official system of authority existed at this time. He referred to these instructors as Britain's 'young knights' and encouraged them to be "bricks in a wall" of the nation.<sup>112</sup> These two metaphors represented Baden-Powell's instructions for boys to at once be self-reliant, free-thinking individuals who followed orders and be willing to sacrifice themselves for the good of greater society. How these 'bricks' understood their own roles in society, as demonstrated through their recorded works in national defence, military training, and character development, will be explored in the following chapters.

Baden-Powell believed that the individual brick at the bottom of the wall need only be responsible for his low place, as it was crucial for the wall's structural integrity, while the brick at the top needs to look over the wall as a whole.<sup>113</sup> Each brick and person has their place, yet it was much more desirable to be at the top, a concept with which Baden-Powell does not accept in his writing other than telling boys to not be jealous of their fellow countrymen's wealth: "remember, whether rich or poor, from castle or from slum, you are all Britons in the first place."<sup>114</sup> Baden-Powell's wall metaphor, while attempting to alleviate class divisions, had the dual effect of reinforcing long-maintained social inequities and

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<sup>110</sup> Boehmer, "Introduction," *Scouting for Boys: Original 1908 Edition*, p. xii.

<sup>111</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: Original 1908 Edition*, p. 5.

<sup>112</sup> Baden-Powell, *Young Knights and Scouting for Boys: Original 1908 Edition*, p. 282.

<sup>113</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: Original 1908 Edition*, pp. 281-282.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 281.

reinforcing Victorian notions of paternalistic responsibility. Testing Baden-Powell's expressions of hierarchy in their local troops, the boys highlighted in chapters three and four will demonstrate that many ideas from the top did indeed transcend into the imaginations of many Scout leaders.

Baden-Powell stressed the importance of service to the nation in his rhetoric and in the formation of the Movement. Baden-Powell rooted the Scout archetype in mythical and literary conceptions of a medieval knight. In *Scouting for Boys*, Baden-Powell positioned King Arthur and Saint George as figures of emulation to young readers, while he wrote that the 'Knights' Code' were "the first rules" the "old knights started" that directly influenced the Scout Laws.<sup>115</sup> The Chief Scout encouraged his audience to read Sir Walter Scott and learn the history of Richard the Lionheart and Julius Caesar to see models of chivalry.<sup>116</sup> Likewise, in his wartime text, *Young Knights of Empire*, Baden-Powell wrote,

Perhaps you wonder what is a Young Knight of the Empire. Well, you know what a knight is—or rather, used to be in the old days—a gallant fellow who was always ready to defend weaker people when they were being bullied; he was brave and honourable, and ready to risk his life in doing his duty according to the code or law of Chivalry.<sup>117</sup>

Here we can see that Baden-Powell established a historical (or rather mythical) precedent for his code of citizenship for his Scout model. Linking Scouts with a noble past, the Chief Scout wrote:

Well, nowadays there are thousands of boys all over the British Empire carrying out the same idea, and making themselves into fine, reliable men, ready to take the place of those who have gone away to fight and who have fallen at the Front. These are the Boy Scouts. Their code is the Scout Law—that is, a set of ten rules which they carry out in their daily life.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid, pp, 212-214.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid, pp. 215-218.

<sup>117</sup> Baden-Powell, *Young Knights*, p. 2.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

Juxtaposing the Scouts with the romantic image of knighthood, Baden-Powell rooted his movement in what Michael Paris describes as a “simpler and more adventurous age,” which encouraged imagination and invited the reader to recapture a time when Englishmen lived for duty, honour, and held the greater good of the land at the forefront of their thoughts and actions.<sup>119</sup> Baden-Powell’s allusion to the medieval knight exemplifies as well Benedict Anderson’s position that “political expression always loom out of an immemorial past, and, still more important, glide into a limitless future.”<sup>120</sup> By rooting Scouting in the past, Baden-Powell projected a prosperous Britain that lay in the hands of an organised, healthy, and civic-minded youth. Echoing this idea, Sam Pryke also observed that linking the “chain of great men - Richard the Lion Heart, Raleigh, Drake, Captain John Smith and so on...grounded the continuity and durability of the characteristics and aspirations of the Scouts.”<sup>121</sup> Baden-Powell indeed wished to capture the imaginations of Britain’s youth by awarding onto them the titles of heirs to Britain’s legendary knights and heroes from old. However, what is apparent from the boys’ testimony in the sources I use for this thesis is that images of youth and the boys themselves influenced each other during the early days of the Movement. The grand figures and adventure tales that Pryke and Paris observe in Scouting’s official structure are significant and contributed to an overall image of the Boy Scouts. However, encouragement and examples from friends and schoolmates, as well as depictions of youth adventure, contributed to Scouting’s development as a local-grown, youth-led movement.

Alexander Fisher for example remembered that he was introduced to Scouting from a friend who was reading *The Scout*. He recalled the cover, which depicted “a scout reconnoitring around a boulder with a number of other fellows in view on the sea shore below

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<sup>119</sup> Michael Paris, *Warrior Nation: Images of War in British Popular Culture, 1850-2000* (London: Reaktion, 2000), p. 108.

<sup>120</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>121</sup> Pryke, “Popularity of Nationalism, p. 315.

him.”<sup>122</sup> Seeing these boys, fictional or not, engaged in Scouting was an instant appeal to the young Fisher. It is difficult to gauge boys’ reception of literature from their journals, as they rarely wrote about how certain literary figures or authors who influenced their actions or beliefs. If they did not mention books and authors specifically, we can only point to the themes and discourse they reproduced. What is apparent, however, in the origin stories that will be highlighted in chapter three, is how influential other young people were in encouraging their peers to take up Scouting. Many boys were sympathetic to Baden-Powell’s message of civic responsibility and were exposed to his heroic image. That peer influence encouraged Fisher to take up Scouting during the Edwardian period reinforces the role friends and peers played in boys’ interest in Scouting.

Likewise, Scout Jack Dorgan recalled he was inspired to join the Movement because of other young Scouts. He stated “[I] don’t know if I was military minded or what, but something I could join and get in touch with other fellas of my own age. I think that was the principle reason why I inquired” about Scouting.<sup>123</sup> While Dorgan confessed to not knowing much about Baden-Powell, he was impressed with his charisma and speaking ability during a public talk in County Durham, which mostly concerned the wars against the Zulus and Boers.<sup>124</sup> Importantly, however, Dorgan noted that “we were all very impressed by what he [Baden-Powell] said, but my eyes often went off to the boys who were with him,” six boys, dress similarly to Baden-Powell and colonial scouts.<sup>125</sup> It was this image of military scouting and the admiration of the other Boy Scouts that encouraged each of these boys to join the Movement.

Peter Yeandle’s recent work suggests that if the civic values promoted through education and literature were “successfully internalised and understood by children,” they

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<sup>122</sup> Fisher, *My Life*, p. 10.

<sup>123</sup> John William ‘Jack’ Dorgan, *IWM Interview* (Interview by Peter M. Hart for the Imperial War Museum), Catalogue no. 9253 <<http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80009043>>.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Dorgan, *IWM Interview*.



would “reinforce the paradigmatic national self-understanding of the empire as part of England’s manifest historical destiny.”<sup>126</sup> In the following chapters, this thesis will demonstrate that the sentiment expressed in the pages of such youth literature and Baden-Powell’s writings was indeed internalised by many young founders of the Scouting Movement. In this regard, Scouting was not only Baden-Powell’s vision of a proactive, civic-minded youth come to life, it was a movement of boys dedicated to the values on which they were conditioned with their entire lives. Their nationalist and civic ideals were present throughout their association with Scouting. It is not the main focus of this thesis to analyse whether boys’ literature can be deemed as nationalistic, but rather look at how and what the boys recorded to uncover their experience with Scouting and broader society.

While this thesis will demonstrate that participating Scouts had sympathies with the Movement before joining through their own writings and records, it is clear that these boys grew up in a social atmosphere that would have exposed them to nationalistic imagery and imperial glorification. Michael Paris’s depicts Britain during this period as a society that promoted “the martial spirit” to children through popular culture.<sup>127</sup> Given that the most popular youth organisations of the time structured themselves along military lines, used militarised language and activities, and encouraged the kind of literature that Paris argues “adopted the warrior as the masculine ideal,” his observation about the broader society can be traced in the daily function of youth group associations.<sup>128</sup> This thesis demonstrates that many Scouts reflected the ‘martial spirit’ of the time, as well as reinforced and promoted such sentiment in their communal works, rhetoric, and public displays. Chapters five and six will

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<sup>126</sup> Peter Yeandle, *Citizenship, nation, empire: the politics of history teaching in England, 1870-1930* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), p. 174.

<sup>127</sup> Michael Paris, *Warrior Nation*: p. 11. For a more detailed account of the presence of nationalist and imperial in the Edwardian social sphere please see John Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society*; J.A. Mangan and Callum McKenzie, “‘Duty unto Death’: the Sacrificial Warrior: English Middle Class Masculinity and Militarism in the Age of New Imperialism, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 25.9 (August 2008), pp. 1080-1105; and *Britain’s Experience of Empire in the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Andrew Thompson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>128</sup> Paris, *Warrior Nation*, p. 9. The Boys Scouts, Boys’ Brigade, and Cadets all structured themselves around a military frame (Springhall, *Youth, Empire, and Society*).

analyse Edwardian Britain's martial culture in much great detail, it is necessary at this stage to provide some background into how Baden-Powell and broader literary culture reinforced images of patriotism and military culture in everyday life.

The serialised format of *Scouting for Boys* placed it within the flourishing genre of the boys' paper. The youth magazine format was already an established medium through which social thinkers and advertisers alike could reach a young and impressionable audience who numbered in the millions.<sup>129</sup> Not only did Baden-Powell and his publishing partners use this format to reach Britain's young male population, but they were speaking to a group of people already inundated with images of national greatness, racial supremacy, and imperial romance. Scouting spread throughout the country very quickly once it became an established extracurricular pastime, yet it was first introduced to boys already familiar with similar ideology, images, and indeed the founder himself. By the time Baden-Powell introduced Scouting, he was already a household name to across Britain. Scouts' compliance with the Movement's more nationalist tendencies stemmed less from manipulation or coercion through deliberate indoctrination, than from the fact these Scouts were predisposed to the Movement's philosophy. The Boy Scouts acted first as a movement, then rapidly developed into an organised society through which middle-class boys formulated nationalistic values already normalized in Edwardian Britain. While political dynamics and social developments shaped British society to a large degree from the top, individual participation contributed to the cultural paradigm among Edwardian youth. Much work has been conducted on the nationalistic images appearing in boys' literature. This thesis, however, will highlight the boys who were most receptive to its message in order to better understand how individuals at the bottom meshed broader social and political ideas with their lived associations.<sup>130</sup> Elite

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<sup>129</sup> Kelly Boyd, "Exemplars and ingrates: imperialism and the boys' story paper, 1880-1930," *Historical Research*, 67.163 (June 1994), p. 143.

<sup>130</sup> For a more detailed account of the debate concerning popular culture and its social impact, please see *Imperialism and Popular Culture*, ed by Mackenzie; *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the*

ideas were received unevenly by the Scouts, who incorporated their influences in a manner that fit their needs.

Before Baden-Powell introduced the world to Scouting, boys were already primed to take part in a movement that promoted service, health, and patriotism. Patrick Dunae asserts that during the height of empire, in the years just before the First World War, schoolboys were so “acutely aware of their imperial heritage” that speaking against the empire in school or similar shared public places would have been met with resistance from not only their teachers, but their peers.<sup>131</sup> This statement on individuals’ perception of imperialism is difficult to prove. It is clear, however, that youth were subjected to such iconography in nearly all aspects of their public lives. While many aspects of a middle-class boy’s life in the time period were dominated by patriotic zeal and imperial enthusiasm, as Dunae observes, “few [sources of imperial ideology] were as prominent or as inspiring as popular literature.”<sup>132</sup> Furthermore, as Kelly Boyd notes, the boys’ paper and popular fiction celebrated and indeed intentionally transmitted public-school values of patriotism and imperial duty to British boys in all aspects of society.<sup>133</sup> Imperial and nationalist imagery was normalised in Edwardian society in part due to boys’ literature.<sup>134</sup>

Boys’ literature often positioned young people as a crucial part of empire building, as Baden-Powell amplified and promoted in his writing. If a boy read the 1 June 1898 edition of

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*Imperial World*, ed by Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); and Joseph A. Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction, 1880-1915* (Farnham, Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2010).

<sup>131</sup> Patrick Dunae, “Boys’ Literature and the Idea of Empire, 1870-1914,” *Victorian Studies*, 24.1 (Autumn, 1980), pp. 105-121.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>133</sup> Kelly Boyd, *Manliness and the Boys’ Story Paper in Britain: A Cultural History, 1855-1940* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), p. 3.

<sup>134</sup> For further literature on Victorian and Edwardian youth literature and development of character and nationalism, see Peter J. Hugill, “Imperialism and Manliness in Edwardian Boys’ Novels,” *Ecumene*, 6.3 (1999), pp. 318-340; Christopher Banham, “‘England and America Against the World’: Empire and the USA in Edwin J. Brett’s *Boys of England*, 1866-1899,” *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 40.2 (Summer 2007), pp. 151-171; and Cynthia Ellen Patton, “‘Not a limitless possession’: Health advice and Readers’ Agency in the *Girl’s Own Paper*, 1880-1890,” *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 45.2 (Summer 2012), pp. 111-133.

*Chums*, a decade before the first jamboree, he would have seen an image of a boy saving an adult man from a bear.



**Figure 1.3. Boy Saves Man from Bear attack, *Chums* 1898**

*Chums* 299.6 (1898), University of Liverpool Library, Special Collections p. 643.

The boy was depicted as brave and steadfast while in harm's way, even as the adult man fled for his life. Such literature suggests that young men were not only capable of serving their country, but that Britain's security depended on youth engagement and service. Likewise, stories such as this suggest the values in Scouting existed in commercial literature and juvenile culture long before Baden-Powell branded it with his own image. This sentiment was perhaps nowhere demonstrated better than in Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* (1901), which was not only a popular novel when it was released, but became highly recommended reading material for Boy Scouts. Baden-Powell told his young readers that "adventures of Kim are well worth reading, because they show what valuable work a boy scout could do for

his country if he were sufficiently trained and sufficiently intelligent.”<sup>135</sup> What is significant about such reading material is that boys’ literature and the Movement put youth at the centre of the action and made them equal figures in imperial efforts. Scouts’ national defence efforts and communal works mirrored the activities and spirit of young people in popular literature of the day.

Even advertisements emphasised the importance youth played in national defence and overall wellbeing of the nation. For example, this advertisement found in the *Graphic* suggests that British boys will have to fight and violently defend their nation and Empire. It is also significant that this advertisement showcased the other models of weapons the company made, encouraging boys to use the air gun as training before upgrading to the Jeffery’s 400 S Rifle and the Jeffery’s 600 Elephant Rifle.

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<sup>135</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: Original 1908 Edition*, p.18.

**"FOR THE EMPIRE."**  
**EVERY BOY SHOULD SHOOT.**



**THE "LABALLE"  
AIR GUN.**

**ILLUSTRATED LIST POST  
FREE.**

No. 1 size, 22 6; No. 3, 35/-

The "LABALLE" Guns are of much sounder construction than the ordinary "Gem" pattern Air Guns, and they shoot with from 30 to 50 per cent. greater force. A "LABALLE" Air Gun is a very suitable Birthday Present for a Boy.

**TARGET & ROOK & RABBIT RIFLES.**

Remington Pattern Rifles, 12/- and 20/-.  
Martini Rifles, 27/6, 35/-, 45/-, 65/-, 120/-.  
Other patterns, from 70/- to 300/-.

A Jeffery 12/- Remington Rifle made 11 consecutive 2 in. Bull's-eyes in the Ladies' Match at Aldershot Rifle Meeting. Distance 50 yards. These Cheap Rifles are all carefully rifled. Jeffery's K 255 Target or Rabbit Rifle is the most accurate miniature Rifle and is very powerful.

Jeffery's 400 S Rifle is the most powerful small bore, and has the longest range of any sporting or military weapon, and is the most accurate shooting Rifle ever made.

Jeffery's 600 Elephant Rifle is the most powerful obtainable and shoots with great accuracy and gives little recoil.

Jeffery's are the leading Rifles of the present day both for Target and Game-Shooting.

Jeffery's 303 Lee-Enfield Target Rifles have made the highest score on record.

Price lists of New and Secondhand Guns and Rifles post free.

**W. J. JEFFERY & CO., 60, Queen Victoria St., E.C.**  
**And 13, King Street, St. James's, London, S.W.**

**Figure 1.4. W.J. Jeffery & Co. Air Rifle Advertisement, 1890**  
'Advertisements and Notices', *The Graphic*, (1 September 1890).

While an attempt to sell air rifles, the advertisement relies on a tradition of masculine shooting culture, as well as the ubiquitous nature of imperial images. The advertisement asserts that every man needs to shoot and fight in order to defend the realm and expand the Empire. Buying the air rifle will give the British boy a head start. If he learned to shoot accurately and well on this beginner weapon, he would have greater success as an imperial servant. Advertisements such as this, coupled with popular adventure stories illustrate Suvir Kaul's observations in his work on Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* that "male protagonists are

defined by their appropriate or inappropriate management of colonial affairs.”<sup>136</sup> These popular stories and boys’ magazines asserted Britain’s right to imperial domination. Even before Baden-Powell encouraged boys to defend the empire, they were long-exposed to imperial and militaristic material.<sup>137</sup>

In a correspondence with Rudyard Kipling, Baden-Powell wrote the imperial poet saying “You were kind enough to give me leave...to quote your story *Kim* in giving the boys a lead in becoming Boy Scouts. We are now encouraging a junior branch of the movement under the name of Wolf Cubs for youngsters between 8 and 11 and I want to enthuse them through your Mowgli and his animal friends of *The Jungle Book*.”<sup>138</sup> The Scouting Movement attracted boys who grew up exposed to imperial literature. While involved with their troops, boys actively developed curriculum that drew from a broader atmosphere of nationalism, imperial dominance, and youth agency within these arenas. Not only did Baden-Powell use boys’ literature to encourage Scouting, as Rosenthal, Pryke and others have demonstrated, but youth themselves developed the Movement with this imagined background in mind. Chapter three will demonstrate that boys incorporated literature from the pre-Scout literature experiences, as well as texts written and recommended by Baden-Powell to develop troops and shape their activities.

## Conclusion

Given that much of the Movement’s official rhetoric reflected Baden-Powell’s own understanding of politics and society, many scholars have viewed Scouting within broader frameworks of Britain’s imperial and nationalist culture from a top-down approach. My

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<sup>136</sup> Suvir Kaul, “*Kim*, or How to Be Young, Male, and British in Kipling’s India,” Rudyard Kipling, *Kim: A Norton Critical Edition*, ed. by Zohreh T. Sullivan (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2002), p. 426.

<sup>137</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: Original 1908 Edition*, p. 13.

<sup>138</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, “Letter to Rudyard Kipling,” 20 July 1916, Scout Association Archive Rudyard Kipling, no. 368.

thesis, however, is more concerned about how the participating boys linked their association with the Movement with their broader understanding of society. Baden-Powell himself noted in his autobiography that the Scouting Movement “started itself” and found its “feet far and wide.”<sup>139</sup> It is imperative that we examine those who propelled the Movement at the ground level. The boy founders of various troops in particular, who are the primary subject of this thesis, largely adhered to the principles sketched by Baden-Powell. However, they operated their local activities and lessons in a manner that adapted official Scout texts with their own understanding of great social issues. Social and academic ideas of manhood, nationalism, citizenship have been the subject of historical inquiry. My main concern, however, is to place such official assumptions against the experience and understanding of social issues of the boys involved in the Movement at the ground level.

Having outlined my plan and methodological approach, this thesis will now turn its main focus to the experience of the Scouts. As this chapter has shown, Edwardian boys were subjected to a series of imperial and patriotic images in their everyday lives before the Scouting Movement formed in 1908. Likewise, youth initiatives aimed at improving the economic position, health, and character of young people were ever-present during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Baden-Powell worked within this system to create his Scouting scheme, while boys at the local level amplified his principles through their own actions. Who took up Baden-Powell’s call-to-action, however, determined the image Scouting took during the Edwardian years. The following chapter will examine the origins of local troops, as well as the economic and social factors that played into its earliest development.

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<sup>139</sup> Baden-Powell, *Lessons from the 'Varsity of Life*, p. 269.



### **Chapter III. Local Origins and Economic Exclusion: Initiative, Privilege, and Self-Reliance**

This chapter will examine how grassroots boys enacted and replicated themes of industriousness and initiative promoted by Scouting's official narrative. I will analyse how class dynamics that existed from the onset of the Movement shaped patrol and troop origins and how uniform and material costs of Scouting excluded many boys and families from fully participating and rising in the ranks. This chapter will also demonstrate how merit awards and badge systems promoted ideals of self-sufficiency and civic duty. The badge system mirrored the vocational aspects of other Edwardian youth initiatives and encouraged boys to act at the local community level to strengthen the nation as a whole. Examining the pre-First World War Scouting Movement through a class lens will demonstrate that regardless of Robert Baden-Powell's rhetoric of class-inclusion, practical restrictions of cost and time inhibited boys in poorer families from fully engaging with Scouting and rising in the ranks. This chapter will further show that Scouting, despite Baden-Powell's vision, reflected the broader experience of economic inequality of its time and did not transform the pre-war era into a society unburdened of 'class identity'.

This chapter will be organised into six sections. First, it is necessary to discuss the terminology and historiography of 'class' in order to establish my approach. Second, this chapter will examine local troop origin stories in order to analyse the earliest ideas that propelled the Movement forward on the ground level. This section will conclude by examining broader Scout historiography in order to situate my empirical research on the boys' stories within the greater social and national literature. This chapter will then examine the badge system to demonstrate how vocational encouragement reflected Edwardian Scouting's economic dichotomies. Fourth, I will examine the role rank systems played in the early troop formations and the ways in which boys established sets of hierarchies. Material

costs of Scouting will be the subject of the fifth section. This section will demonstrate that very basic tools required to participate in Scouting excluded many from joining, while increased costs at the higher level prevented many from ascending into top positions in the Movement. Finally, this chapter will highlight physical and verbal altercations that occurred between Scouts and non-members in order to show how Scouts represented economically less privileged boys in their writings and how pre-existing class dynamics not only remained despite Baden-Powell's rhetoric to the contrary, but that class consciousness was indeed a crucial aspect of the Scouting Movement at the local level.

With Baden-Powell's scheme in place and his call-to-action circulating around the country, it was up to Edwardian boys to carry out the message. At the local level, however, his plan was not always enacted exactly. By looking at the origins and typical functions of community troops, we will be able to get a sense how Baden-Powell's ideology was adapted, enacted, and appropriated by local actors to suit their own needs and understanding of the Movement and wider society. Official Scout rhetoric—from both Baden-Powell and his supporters in positions of authority—often claimed Scouting attempted to alleviate class tensions by encouraging participation from working-class boys, yet in the lived experience it was prohibitive in financial and time costs, and remained opposed to incorporating forms of working-class culture into its curriculum or framework. Middle and upper-class individuals dominated positions of leadership in the highest positions of authority. John Springhall's influential study demonstrates that high-level officers in both the Boy Scouts and the Boys' Brigade were Nonconformist or Anglican, as well as “drawn from the public-school educated, professional or employer middle-class.”<sup>140</sup> Likewise, Michael Blanch's examination of youth initiatives in Edwardian Birmingham demonstrates that while working-class individuals did hold more positions of authority in the Movement, they were generally

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<sup>140</sup> Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society*, p. 92.

from skilled labour or management backgrounds.<sup>141</sup> The evidence presented in this thesis corroborates these findings, yet while one's background was often an important conditioning factor in how one ran a troop, the practical and specific functions through which broader ideas operated on the local level need to be examined. Doing so will allow us to create a chain of influence from Baden-Powell's broad ideas of self-reliance and nationalist ideologies, to Scouting authority, to the young local founders, and finally to the average boys themselves.

### **Issues of 'Class'**

Before I get into the heart of this chapter which analyses how boys responded to Scouting's official message, it is necessary to ground my examination in scholarship on early twentieth-century class. The overall historical consensus, as stated in the previous chapter, is that from its conception the Scouting Movement was an attempt to encourage British youth to serve the nation in the manner Baden-Powell saw necessary for future prosperity. Class played a central role in the Movement from the early days. While 'lower-class' boys were welcomed to join the Scouts, it was the upper-class boys who were tasked with starting the movement, thereby infusing it with the values of patriotism and ideology already conditioned into their minds through their social stations.<sup>142</sup> Developing on Michael Rosenthal's argument that Scouting attempted to supplement working-class identity with public-school values, gives us evidence to suggest that not only did Baden-Powell ground the Movement's official ethos in the language of paternalistic imperialism, but we can also see an aspirational trend among participants on the ground level to achieve forms of the idealized Scout archetype presented in Baden-Powell's text.

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<sup>141</sup> Michael Blanch, *Nation, Empire and the Birmingham Working Class, 1899-1914* (Thesis, October 1975 University of Birmingham), pp. 290-314.

<sup>142</sup> Rosenthal, *Character Factory*, pp. 88-107.

Blanch's study on working and middle-class Birmingham reveals the problems associated with a broad understanding of 'class identity.' Because Scout officials and local founders developed their troops within a cultural and social framework of class discourse, I am compelled to examine their writings through a 'class' lens. First, however, it is necessary to state how I use 'class' in this thesis. For the purpose of my approach, class is viewed through the ability to pay for Scouting—that is the accessibility of full participation within the Scouting Movement—and the promoted ideology of Scouting from the upper levels. As Joanna Bourke notes, identifying one's class is not as simple as marking education, accents, income, or hobbies, nor do such definitions take into account the changing modes of production over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>143</sup> Furthermore, while E. P. Thompson observed that class consciousness developed in the first half of the nineteenth century through the relationship between the necessity for political and economic security and social experience, as Ross McKibbin's argues, the Edwardian Period saw not only a greater comingling of previously isolated social groups in church and community events, but an increased consumerism that led to blurring divisions with the middle-classes.<sup>144</sup> Boys involved in the Scouting Movement demonstrated that the clear class divisions Thompson marked in the mid-Victorian period waned to a certain degree by the Edwardian era. In short, people did not always subscribe to set 'class' rules.<sup>145</sup> That is not to suggest, however, that boys did not take their family values with them into Scouting. Their family backgrounds often influenced their ability to fully participate in the Movement and influenced their

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<sup>143</sup> Bourke, *Working-Class Cultures in Britain*, pp. 1-5.

<sup>144</sup> E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York, Pantheon, 1964), pp.9-14 and Ross McKibbin, *The Ideologies of Class: Social Relations in Britain, 1880-1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp.1-41.

<sup>145</sup> For works that address issues of linguistics and cultural representations of 'class' see: Gareth Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in Working Class History 1832-1982* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Patrick Joyce, *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class, c. 1848-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Bourke, *Working-Class Cultures in Britain*; Jan Pakulski and Malcom Waters, *The Death of Class* (London: Sage, 1996); and Alan Campbell and John McIlroy, "Britain: The Twentieth Century," *Histories of Labour: National and International Perspectives*, ed. by Joan Allen, Alan Campbell, and John McIlroy (Pontypool, Wales: Merlin Press, 2010), pp. 99-136.

attraction to Scouting in the first place. For the sake of this study, however, it is more useful to look at how the ability or inability to pay for the material goods or activities in Scouting reflected economic disparities in broader society and how such disparities reinforced ‘class’ dynamics among boys within patrols.

The middle-class nature of Scouting can be observed as well through the ideas of thrift, aspiration, health, and character development that were promoted in the Movement. Being prepared was not just a reminder to bring a compass on a camping trip, but an overriding moral guide of citizen training. These ideas were reflected in official Scout literature, Scout ephemera, recommended texts, games, and awards. Before 1920, a Scout could earn the Healthy Man, Athlete, Missioner, and Thriftyman badges, reflecting what McKibbin calls the “long time-scale” of the middle class, the tendency of measuring one’s worth in the ability to look forward and plan for one’s future.<sup>146</sup> This encouragement to plan ahead was a response to what Baden-Powell believed to be working-class habits of frivolously spending money on material, chemical, and temporary items or entertainments. In this regard, Scouting not only linked, as Sam Pryke argues, long-term health with the future prosperity of the nation, but grounded the Movement’s ethos firmly within a class framework.<sup>147</sup> Boys earning Scout badges through their daily Scout activities was a way in which boys at the local levels contributed to and associated with these the bigger, official ideas of the Movement. Linking this back to other youth initiatives of the period, we can again see how Scouting not only mirrored other efforts, but how these boys were already living in a society that promoted civic responsibility and development in many different arenas. Just as Baden-Powell responded to broader national anxieties, the boys themselves

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<sup>146</sup> *Scout Tests and how to Pass Them: Commemorative 1914 Edition* (London: Michael O’Mara Books, 2013), *Brown’s Boy Scout Diary and Note Book* (Glasgow, James Brown and Son, 1921) and McKibbin, *Ideologies of Class*, pp. 176-177.

<sup>147</sup> Pryke, “Control of Sexuality,” p. 24.

developed the Movement from the ground within through their own understandings of these themes.

### **Local Troop Origins and Youth Initiative**

Looking at the individuals who organised the first troops will give us a sense of who directly responded to Baden-Powell's call to take up Scouting. While Scouting was technically open to individuals from all class backgrounds, as I have already argued, there were prohibitions on membership and most importantly, achieving high rank. Furthermore, the manner in which troops formed and the individuals involved in the process reflected Baden-Powell's desire to have the Movement led by people he deemed socially pre-conditioned for leadership. The troops in this case study also demonstrate that while Baden-Powell's teachings on independence and self-initiative were the catalyst for troop formation, his control and pressure from the top quickly turned these individuals from inspired boys to Boy Scouts in the fashion Baden-Powell intended.

The origins of the 1<sup>st</sup> Chiswick Troop demonstrated the grassroots nature of the Movement, while exemplifying Baden-Powell's desire to encourage self-reliance in his readers. With no other structure as a model apart from what they read in *Scouting for Boys*, the pioneers of the 1<sup>st</sup> Chiswick characterize, according to troop member Alwyn Dawson, "a story of the first days of Scouting not of the Movement as a whole but as it appeared to a few boys working out the meaning of Scouting for themselves."<sup>148</sup> A fourteen-year-old boy named Harold Price, seemingly enamoured with the Baden-Powell celebrity that existed since the Siege of Mafeking, shared copies of *Scouting for Boys* with his friends and schoolmates

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<sup>148</sup> Alwyn Dawson, *Story of the 1<sup>st</sup> Chiswick: Early Years, 1908-1939*, Scout Association Archives, TSA/GRO/COU/LON/14, p. 2.

for the purpose of forming their own troop.<sup>149</sup> Dawson, who recorded his memories of being a Scout in the 1970s, also indicated that many of the boys in the 1<sup>st</sup> Chiswick Troop, and many boys of his generation for that matter, grew up reading “Penny Bloods” like *The Captain*. ‘Penny bloods’ or ‘penny dreadful’ magazines were cheap, popular fiction consumed by the millions in Victorian and Edwardian Britain. Dawson recalled that it was not until Baden-Powell teamed up with publisher Arthur Pearson to create *The Scout* that a suitable magazine for boys that encouraged citizenship and “instruct[ed] those interested in Scouting” emerged.<sup>150</sup> Dawson’s sentiment suggests he, like Baden-Powell, believed such publications were frivolous and lacked the perceived moral substance of *The Scout*. Through what J.S. Bratton observed was consciously pursued by educators to disseminate imperial ideology to young readers, an effort to create morally and patriotically substantial publications for boys started about thirty years prior to the period of Dawson’s childhood.<sup>151</sup> Most significantly in Dawson’s testimony, however, is that he highlighted an occasion when his friend was sent to bed without supper for reading Dick Turpin stories, indicating a pre-existing relationship with such literature as well as recognition that one’s leisurely time should be spent in character development of some form.<sup>152</sup> This idea and prior relationship with adventure literature contributed to troop’s formation.

Keen to take Scouting seriously, Price and his friends recruited the help of a young man named Tom Foley, a camping enthusiast and member of Price’s church. Foley provided guidance, camping experience, and dedication to Baden-Powell’s Scouting principles. The pioneers of the 1<sup>st</sup> Chiswick also made the conscious decision to exist independently from other established troops or churches, “as prospective members belonged to several different

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid, p. 3.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> J.S. Bratton, “Of England, Home, and Duty: The Image of England in Victorian and Edwardian Juvenile Fiction,” *Imperialism and Popular Culture*, ed. by MacKenzie, p. 76.

<sup>152</sup> Dawson, *1<sup>st</sup> Chiswick*, p. 3.

denominations, one being of the Jewish faith.”<sup>153</sup> While this troop reflected Baden-Powell’s desire for inclusion, the fact that many troops existed within pre-existing clubs and churches does indicate that these boys believed church affiliation could preclude members from joining their troop.<sup>154</sup> Likewise, Dawson states in his account that early members were from “widely different classes—from Public Schools’ (*sic*) Grammar and Council Schools,” yet the founding members and troop leadership came from more affluent families.<sup>155</sup> The meeting hall itself was in Tom Foley’s family’s high street picture frame shop, which also possibly highlights the elevated economic state of the young Scout’s financial background. Following Baden-Powell’s message, these boys did take the initiative to form their own troop and allowed boys from a variety of backgrounds to join, yet practical and pre-standing class discrepancies created a hierarchy of authority and responsibility from the very beginning of this troop.

While the 1<sup>st</sup> Chiswick displayed the self-reliant attitude Baden-Powell encouraged in his readers, they were actively beholden to Baden-Powell’s texts. Dawson recorded that “the early Scoutmasters had no training or even tradition,” but “they had Scouting for Boys (*sic*), and it was up to them to make what they could of it.”<sup>156</sup> *Scouting for Boys*, however, was explicitly detailed in its vision of Scouting: from its idealized Scouting figure to descriptions of how boys should form troops and dress. While many boys across Britain surely deviated from the official path in the early years, the 1<sup>st</sup> Chiswick founders did not. Dawson wrote that Scoutmaster Foley “deserves high praise for leading the 1<sup>st</sup> Chiswick so close to Baden-Powell’s proposals” and that “armed with nothing but *Scouting for Boys* undeviating he set

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid, p. 4.

<sup>154</sup> Baden-Powell linked the Movement in the Judeo-Christian tradition, yet stressed that it should not interfere with boys’ religious beliefs. The Movement even came under pressure in the early years from religious institutions to integrate with the church organisations, a proposition Headquarters opposed, while many non-conformist churches opposed Scout affiliation due to perceived militarism. See Warren’s “Baden-Powell, Scout Movement, and Citizen Training,” pp. 376-393 for a more in-depth analysis on Scouting’s relationship with religious organisations.

<sup>155</sup> Dawson, *1st Chiswick*, p. 4.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid, p. 6.



the right course.”<sup>157</sup> Not only did the scoutmaster lead his troop along the official line, rarely diverging from the parameters set forth by Baden-Powell, but he was recognized and praised for his adherence by at least one Scout under his charge. These young pioneers of Scouting took up Baden-Powell’s call to begin a movement based on self-reliance, while demonstrating the grassroots nature of the early days. Through their own agency and reflecting a genuine sympathy with Baden-Powell’s ideology, the Scouting Movement was founded by the cumulative initiative of thousands of boys creating hundreds of troops in this emulative manner.

The importance of leadership during these early years of Scouting is evident in the founding of many troops throughout Britain. Like the 1<sup>st</sup> Chiswick, boys who formed the 26<sup>th</sup> Bristol Troop began Scouting with nothing more than Baden-Powell’s textual encouragement. Scout E. A. Walters wrote that “my story begins sometime during the summer of 1910, when we village lads formed ourselves into a gang, tied a rope around our waists and equipped with a broomstick went out into the surrounding fields and woods.”<sup>158</sup> Baden-Powell stressed the importance of a staff or walking stick in *Scouting for Boys*, which may offer a much-needed explanation for why these boys carried broomsticks. The Chief Scout asserted that staves “as high as a scout’s shoulder,” can be used around the camp to create flag posts or make-shift stretchers for an injured Scout, and can even become a record of achievement when one carves symbols of accomplishment on its surface.<sup>159</sup> While these Scouts were initially most interested in the material objects, staves and penknives, and adventure which Scouting promised, they soon became more immersed in the serious and organised structure the Movement offered them.

After trying in vain for some time to find a scoutmaster to lead them, the boys from the 26<sup>th</sup> Bristol, eventually linked up with a young gymnasium class instructor interested in

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid, p. 6-7.

<sup>158</sup> E.A. Walters, *Scouting with the 26<sup>th</sup> Bristol: 1910-1960*, 4, Scout Association Archives, TSA/PER/16/1-4.

<sup>159</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: Original 1908 Edition*, p. 40.

forming his own troop. Under the care of Corram Castle and his brother, Graham, the troop evolved from an unorganised band of children acting out adventure stories in the woods, into proper Scouts. They camped, organised trips, and earned money for their troop through Baden-Powell's instructions. Their part in a national movement would be reinforced when, in 1911, the Windsor Park rally where George V oversaw an inspection of assembled troops.<sup>160</sup> It was through personal initiative and a desire to achieve the image of an authentic Scout that these boys sought out leadership for their group. Likewise, it was these two Castle brothers, sons of a solicitor and in their early twenties, who Walters cited as leading their patrols to success.<sup>161</sup> He claimed the troop "numbered 20, with one King's Scout, three first class Scouts and 62 proficiency badges" among them.<sup>162</sup> The 26<sup>th</sup> Bristol exemplified Baden-Powell's desire for older, middle-class boys to show their younger counterparts the path to proper citizenship.

While many smaller patrols sought out leaders to guide them in successful Scouting, so too did some individuals offer their services to existing patrols. Many Scouts looked for boys for whom they could lead. In North London, a young man named Ronald Francis pulled together several patrols to make a troop. Through his "enterprise and enthusiasm," Francis secured a meeting place for his boys, organised many Scouting activities, and became the scoutmaster over at least eight patrols consisting of dozens of young scouts.<sup>163</sup> In *Scouting for Boys*, Baden-Powell compared Scouts to the romanticised image of medieval knights, an example of what Jon Cranfield cites as Victorian and Edwardian "calls toward 'traditional' ideals" "wielded as guards against the now familiar threat of modernity."<sup>164</sup> Baden-Powell wrote that "in peace time, when there was no fighting to be done, the knight would daily ride

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<sup>160</sup> Walters, *26<sup>th</sup> Bristol*, p. 5.

<sup>161</sup> Adam C. Castle: The 1901 English Census," <[www.ancestrylibrary.com](http://www.ancestrylibrary.com)>.

<sup>162</sup> Walters, *26<sup>th</sup> Bristol*, p. 6.

<sup>163</sup> *57<sup>th</sup> N. London Troop, Baden-Powell Boy Scouts*, 1-5, Scout Association Archives, 57<sup>th</sup>/52<sup>nd</sup> North London Troop, no. 203.

<sup>164</sup> J. L. Cranfield, "Chivalric Machines: The Boer War, the Male Body, and the Grand Narrative in the *Stand Magazine*, *Victorian Literature and Culture*, vol. 40 (2012), p. 564.

about looking for a chance of doing a good turn to any wanting help,” indicating that boys should always be ready and seeking to offer their assistance.<sup>165</sup>

Likewise, a fourteen-year-old from near Manchester named Alexander Fisher, already a member of the Boys’ Life Brigade, moved from troop to troop, always looking to improve and develop patrols in his local area. Focusing on Fisher’s endeavours for the moment, we can see how one enthusiastic boy attempted to incorporate the Scouting ethos not only into the troops under his charge, but into his personal identity. Like the boys from the 1<sup>st</sup> Chiswick Troop, Fisher reflected Baden-Powell’s message of self-initiative and gathered his friends to join a patrol. He admits that they “played at the game” for the first few months after joining his friends. However, he became more serious about the endeavour after he convinced his mother to buy him his own copy of *Scouting for Boys*. Inside its pages, he would find encouragement for Scouts to earn money themselves for their own equipment, though Fisher’s experiences reflects the common reality that the teenage boy still relied on his parents for financial support.<sup>166</sup>

Equipped with his copy of the founding text, Fisher wished to pass this expertise onto his troop. Fearing that his autodidactic knowledge of Scouting was insufficient, his troop sought formal recognition from a Scout officer from nearby Manchester and perform the ‘tenderfoot’ test on his patrol.<sup>167</sup> A tenderfoot, as described by the founder, was a boy who was not yet a Scout, but was in the process of becoming one.<sup>168</sup> Certain tests and measures, such as learning knots and knowing the Scout Laws, were required of boys in order be officially recognised Scouts. While many troops and patrols originated through grassroots initiative as Baden-Powell wished, it did not take long for the Chief Scout to secure management and eventual copyright over the Movement. Fisher’s experience is significant in

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<sup>165</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: Original 1908 Edition*, p. 213.

<sup>166</sup> Fisher, *My Life*, p. 10.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid, p. 11.

<sup>168</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: Original 1908 Edition*, pp. 33-34.

that it demonstrated a desire to not only camp, hike, and perform other activities with his friends, but to attach their endeavours to a wider movement of his peers. These stories, recorded by the Scouts themselves, show how these witnesses to the Movement understood the broader social ideals manifested in Scouting and their role within its framework.

Just as Fisher and his Manchester area boys found inspiration from the founding text, Scouting in Sutton resulted when a group of boys were encouraged to form patrols by *Scouting for Boys*. Patrol Leader H.A. Prince wrote in 1913 that “in June and July of 1908, several members of the County School, Sutton—readers of the new journal ‘The Scout’—came to the conclusion that ‘B.P.’s’ scheme was jolly well worth trying.”<sup>169</sup> From this passage in Prince’s writing, we can see the boys responded directly to Baden-Powell’s text and created a patrol based on his encouragement. While these boys carried out parades and various activities amongst themselves from the onset, Prince noted they actively sought out a scoutmaster to bring legitimacy to their group.<sup>170</sup> Prince wrote that a young draper by the name of Mr. Clutten helped the boys with their first uniforms and expressed interest in taking on the responsibility of scoutmaster for the boys. Clutten had made a failed attempt to start a troop himself, through the local Y.M.C.A., before finding willing followers in Prince’s patrol.<sup>171</sup> Once the boys had their scoutmaster, they became officially registered and found a permanent meeting place.<sup>172</sup>

Like the Bristol troop, the boys from Sutton took the initiative to begin their own patrol. Although their early fondness for parades suggests they had a more serious attitude, right from the start, than their adventuring comrades in Bristol. Likewise, when Allan Upward took over as scoutmaster of the Sutton troop in 1910, he attempted to further legitimise Scouting in the community by taking steps to form a “Sutton and District Boy

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<sup>169</sup> H.A. Prince, *Early Days: A Short History of Scouting in Sutton* (November, 1913), p. 1, Scout Association Archives, TSA/GRO/COU/LON/2/1/A15/2.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid, pp. 1-2.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid, p. 2.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

Scout Association” in part through garnering public support.<sup>173</sup> Scouting was not merely a game to these boys. From the earliest days of their Scouting experience, they attempted to link their association with the Movement to wider social and public life.

Through their own initiative, these Sutton boys took Baden-Powell’s textual call-to-action and created local patrols and activities. In the 1970s, individuals connected with the 1<sup>st</sup> Wallington Troop collected stories, photographs, and contemporary writings from original, Edwardian troop members.<sup>174</sup> Many surviving Scouts were contacted and their stories paint a somewhat typical scenario of the early Scouting experience. Ken Purser, for example, remembered that during “Sunday church parade,” he and the others “used to get a full bugle band of about eight bugles four or six drummers and...march from Ross Parade down to the Parish Church (*sic*).<sup>175</sup> W. Reginald Powles-Hunt stated he was “very keen on learning” the various skills and jobs Scouting offered and attempted to earn as many badges and awards he could.<sup>176</sup> Furthermore, Vic Stocker discussed the somewhat shabby and often uncertain locations of early meeting and camping sites, stating that “we had a hut in Rotherfield Road on a waste piece of ground” where they would conduct their Scout business.<sup>177</sup> These testimonies appear quite standard or reflective on the surface, yet they reveal many themes crucial to Scouting’s early days as a youth led movement. They operated with the limited means available to them, yet strove to link their experience with a broader Scout association, both Headquarters and the nation-wide Scout community.

The importance of public demonstrations and displays appear consistently in all of these boys’ recollections. The fifth chapter, ‘Scouts on Display’, will examine community aspects of Scouting in greater detail, yet it is important at this juncture to recognise that appearance and reputation were crucial aspects of the Movement from the beginning. Public

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid, p. 3.

<sup>174</sup> “1<sup>st</sup> Wallington,” Scout Association Archives, TSA/GRO/COU/LON/2/1/A15/2.

<sup>175</sup> Ken Purser, “1<sup>st</sup> Wallington,” Scout Association Archives, TSA/GRO/COU/LON/2/1/A15/2.

<sup>176</sup> W. Reginald Powles-Hunt, “1<sup>st</sup> Wallington,” Scout Association Archives, TSA/GRO/COU/LON/2/1/A15/2.

<sup>177</sup> Vic Stocker, “1<sup>st</sup> Wallington,” Scout Association Archives, TSA/GRO/COU/LON/2/1/A15/2.

displays not only established a presence in the boys' local communities, but they helped Scouts link their activities with boys across the country. Each of these boys and troops took up Baden-Powell's call to Scouting at the local level, and in doing so created a movement based around a common set of rules, guidelines, and ideology. Scouting was the connective tissue that linked boys who devoted themselves to civic duty, community activity, and national assistance.

These examples of early troop formations highlight several important themes crucial to understanding the pre-First World War Scouting Movement in how it was envisioned from the top and how its ideology was enacted consciously by the boys at the local level. These particular boys reflected Baden-Powell's manifesto through their physical formation, providing microcosmic examples that ideologies of self-reliance and civic responsibility encouraged the Scouting Movement and attracted patriotic boys looking to establish their place in society. Not only did Baden-Powell and like-minded individuals want middle-class boys to lead the Movement, but they wanted boys beneath them to listen to their guidance. The 1<sup>st</sup> Chiswick and the 26<sup>th</sup> Bristol in particular brought Baden-Powell's desires to reality, personifying what John Gillis observes of Scouting as an "extension of the relatively stable adjustment of middle-class norms and aristocratic traditions."<sup>178</sup> Extending Gillis's argument, we can see these boys not only conformed to a larger attempt to place British youth in the "economy, polity, and social order," but established themselves as active agents in the process.<sup>179</sup>

While the boys often reflected Baden-Powell's beliefs on social and national issues, they developed his plans alongside their own experience with nationhood, empire, and society. Historians of youth movements have demonstrated the nationalistic nature of

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<sup>178</sup> John R. Gillis, "Conformity and Rebellion: Contrasting Styles of English and Germany Youth, 1900-1933," *History of Education Quarterly*, vol. 13, no. 3 (Autumn, 1973), p. 251.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

Scouting's official structure.<sup>180</sup> The fifth chapter will show how boys incorporated the broad ideas of nationhood on which these scholars have written, yet within the context of class background, it is important to note that 'class' does not always dictate one's political, philosophical, or recreational leanings. There were certainly trends more or less visible in certain demographics, which again is why we must look at the capability to participate with Scouting through the practical ability to afford it, similar to the way J. A. Mangan observed sport should be viewed in the cultural context, but with the recognition that its operation was not completely isolated to any particular group.<sup>181</sup> As practicality dominated much of sport association, Scouting was largely popular among middle-class boys due to the cost restrictions and geographic setting. As football became synonymous with working-class culture, Scouting's origins at the local level reflected the middle-class virtues of self-determination, health, forward thinking, and citizenship on which it was founded from the top.

Michael Rosenthal argues Baden-Powell's metaphor to 'be a brick' represented the Chief Scout's desire to create a strict class hierarchy by which members of the wall happily adhered to their allocated position in the class system to support the nation, while Robert MacDonald argues that Scouting promoted imperial service and encouraged boys to do their part for the Empire and the military.<sup>182</sup> I want to go beyond Rosenthal's position that Baden-Powell designed the Movement in such a way that socially superior boys led working-class and poorer boys down the path to proper citizenship, by analysing the records and textual

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<sup>180</sup> For more comprehensive studies on nationalism and its incorporation into the Movement at the top levels, see Springhall "Baden-Powell and the Scouting Movement before 1920"; Warren, "Baden-Powell, Scout Movement and Citizen Training"; Pryke, "Popularity of Nationalism"; Björn Sundmark, "Citizenship and Children's Identity in *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils* and *Scouting for Boys*," *Children's Literature in Education*, 40 (9 Jan 2009), pp. 109-199; Paris, *Warrior Nation*, 104-109; and Tammy Proctor *Civilians in a World at War, 1914-1918* (New York: New York University Press, 2010). Likewise see Parsons, *Race, Resistance* and McDonald, *Sons of the Empire* for Scouting's development and relationship with nationalism in colonial Africa.

<sup>181</sup> Mike Huggins, "'Direct and Indirect Influence': J. A. Mangan and the Victorian Middle Classes: Major Revisionists in the History of Sport," *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 20. 4 (10 September 2010), p. 27.

<sup>182</sup> See Michael Rosenthal, *Character Factory* and Robert H. MacDonald, *Sons of the Empire*.

reception of the boys themselves.<sup>183</sup> Looking at how these troops physically formed, who was involved in the formation, and what ideals they promoted shows that while Scouting was technically open to all individuals, these troops were formed by boys ideologically sympathetic with Baden-Powell. Through their own agency, yet encouraged from Baden-Powell, the enthusiastic young boys presented in this chapter established the first troops and started a youth movement based on patriotism, duty, and paternalism.

Rosenthal argues that Baden-Powell believed that ‘being a brick’ meant working-class boys needed follow the guidance of their social betters. Relying on a speech given by Baden-Powell at Eton in 1904, Rosenthal wrote that “the firm sense of class reality” “underlay Scouting’s egalitarianism,” claiming that Baden-Powell’s rhetoric of class inclusion had the more sinister motivation of eliminating working-class culture through upper-class character development.<sup>184</sup> For Rosenthal, this speech represented the prologue to *Scouting for Boys* and the Movement. While Rosenthal goes too far in assuming Baden-Powell had a clear trajectory for how he wanted Scouting to develop, as argued in the previous chapter, the overall mentality of Baden-Powell’s understanding of class hierarchies located in his Eton speech is evident in his subsequent publications as well.<sup>185</sup>

Rosenthal, however, like most of the works concerning Baden-Powell and Scouting, downplays the roll of the audience and does not engage with the Eton students. While it is not clear to what extent Eton students absorbed the Hero of Mafeking’s message, *The Chronicle*, Eton’s newspaper, did feature a response from a student contributor. He wrote that Baden-Powell told them:

We ought to learn ourselves, and then get together common people at home who would learn; in this way 500 boys might raise 5000 men for England. He would be happy to hear from anyone in the holidays. Also we ought to practise chivalry

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<sup>183</sup> Rosenthal, *Character Factory*, pp. 88-107. For further reading on Scouting’s attempt to instil upper-class values or public school masculinity on Britain’s youth population at large, see Parsons, “Een-Gonyama Gonyama” and Sundmark, “Citizenship and Children’s Identity.”

<sup>184</sup> Rosenthal, *Character Factory*, p. 60.

<sup>185</sup> See Warren, “Baden-Powell, Scouting Movement, and Citizen Training,” p. 387.



even in peace, and imitate the spirit of men who could write their application to serve in a war in their own blood.<sup>186</sup>

While Baden-Powell used analogies of knights training squires and told boys to be bricks, the underlying image of class was apparent and received by the students. The highest ranks at Scout Headquarters and administrative leadership were staffed by people from upper-class backgrounds. Furthermore, as John Springhall has demonstrated, upper-class individuals linked Victorian philanthropy with the Scouting ideal of ‘doing a good turn’ and either started troops in poorer areas or merged pre-existing Boy’s Brigade groups or Scout troops under larger, umbrella collections.<sup>187</sup> As Rosenthal indicates, however, the students of Eton, despite hearing the speech and reproducing its content in subsequent issues of *The Chronicle*, did not take up Scouting during this time. It took another four years later, once Baden-Powell’s proposal was refined and expanded into *Scouting for Boys*, for boys to accept the call. The fact that many middle-class boys around the country, not from the highest levels of society, were so instrumental in founding the first troops is where the most important aspects of reception, aspiration, and ideological sympathy figure into Scouting and Edwardian youth culture.

A Clapham Scout leader reflected Baden-Powell’s ideology and lexicon by linking the phrase “be a brick” with an image of Scouts passing on dispatch notes.<sup>188</sup> Baden-Powell used many metaphors, parables, fables, and anecdotes to convey his lessons to his young audience. From his lesson that Britain owes its greatness to the conviction of great heroes such as Francis Drake and John Smith, to his encouragement for Scouts to emulate Rudyard Kipling’s Kim’s ability to learn and adapt quickly and his keen observation skills, Baden-Powell used a combination of literature, folktales, newspaper clippings, mystery and crime stories, and tales from his own imperial adventures to disseminate his lessons on citizenship

<sup>186</sup> “Lecture,” *Eton College Chronicle*, no. 1075 (8 Dec 1904), p. 590.

<sup>187</sup> Springhall, *Youth, Empire, and Society*, pp. 85-97.

<sup>188</sup> *The Raven*, ed. by W. Dane, (September 1908), Scout Association Archives, TSA/PER/100/1, p. 12.

and character building.<sup>189</sup> Perhaps the metaphor most representative of his philosophy, however, was his instruction to ‘be a brick.’ Baden-Powell wrote that “we are very much like bricks in a wall, we have each our place, though it may seem a small one in so big a wall. But if one brick gets rotten, or slips out of place, it begins to throw an undue strain on others, cracks appear, and the wall totters.”<sup>190</sup> Boys’ positions in the Movement were linked to their positions in the country.

The boys’ diaries and camp journals reveal that many aspired to be good Scouts. For these boys, Scout association replaced class identity. This is not to suggest that these boys were unaware of class issues, but rather that they seemed more concerned with Scouting. Engaging with class dynamics in somewhat roundabout ways, these boys aspired to achieve an ideal Scout image, created by Baden-Powell and reinforced throughout Britain’s imperial culture, which was characterized by martial public school values, middle-class Victorian self-reliance, and paternal civic responsibility. As Timothy Parsons argues that Baden-Powell promoted fitness by incorporating ‘tribal African’ dances and customs into Scouting, demonstrating Scouting’s reaction to physical degeneration, racial hierarchy, and imperial uncertainty, so too were elements of class tensions apparent in the Scout structure, activities, and official narrative.<sup>191</sup> Linking Roger Chartier’s observation that certain texts and genres affect behaviour patterns in accordance with what social group the material is circulated with Scouting, we can see how these boys incorporated Baden-Powell, adventure fiction, and other literature to which they would have been exposed into their own experience in the Movement.<sup>192</sup>

As stated in the introduction, the records left by the Scouts with whom this project is concerned are sporadic. They are held by the Scout Association Archives, county or city

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<sup>189</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys, Original 1908 Edition*, pp. 13-18.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid, p. 282.

<sup>191</sup> Parsons, “Een-Gonyama Gonyama, p. 58.”

<sup>192</sup> Chartier, *Order of Books*, p. 7.

records locations, libraries, peoples' homes, or in random locations around the country. Also, given that around 107,000 boys were recognised by Headquarters in 1909, just one year after *Scouting for Boys* was released, it is impossible to know what every Scout involved in the movement believed about greater social issues.<sup>193</sup> While we cannot quantitatively know the extent to which middle-class boys founded troops throughout the country, the surviving records do demonstrate the historical assertions that Scouting was a middle-class Movement not only in ideology, but in practice for many troops. Looking at the individuals instrumental in founding troops, their activities, and what lessons they disseminated to their scouts will illuminate how and which aspects of Baden-Powell's teachings and ideals of the broader imperial and national culture were appropriated into Scouting.

So what we see, therefore, is a movement founded on upper-class principles at the very top, positions of scoutmasters staffed by military and middle-class individuals, and local troops founded by middle-class boys who attempted to disseminate those principles to boys from a variety of backgrounds in the working and middle classes. This thesis will now analyse how and in what ways Baden-Powell's message and ideology was received by individuals in several of the first Scout troops around England, demonstrating that these boys were in fact receptive to the official narrative, founded troops within the guidelines of *Scouting for Boys*, and reflected broader social and class-based mentalities towards, industriousness, health, and moral character building, yet did so as well within their own understanding of these parameters.

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<sup>193</sup> Boehmer, "Introduction," *Scouting for Boys: Original 1908 Edition*, p. xii.

## Rank, Hierarchies, and Status

While these origin stories show how the first Scouts transitioned from casual play groups to official troops, a system of ranks served to organise the Movement's members into a hierarchy. Scout ranking structures were present from the beginning and an important part of Baden-Powell's efforts to instil discipline in the boys and evoke a military rigour. Around six boys created a patrol, while two or more patrols created a troop. The idea was, in Baden-Powell's words, for "the Patrol System is to give real responsibility to as many boys as possible" and to show each boy that "he has some individual responsibility for the good of his Patrol."<sup>194</sup> Through their own individual efforts, the boys would work towards the good of the whole. Parroting common ideas of British exceptionalism, Baden-Powell envisioned Britain as a nation of free-thinking, self-reliant individuals working in unison for the greater good of the nation and Empire: "bricks" in the wall of the Empire, each doing their part to maintain its foundation.<sup>195</sup> The Scouting structure not only reflects Baden-Powell's ideals of hierarchy, but created a system through which many Scouts at the local level operated on a daily basis.

While any boy could become a Scout, it took more time and enthusiasm to achieve a position of leadership. For the role of scoutmaster, the instructions claimed the boy or man should possess all the qualifying attributes of his subordinate ranks, and also to "be a good leader and a good sportsman, should command the respect of his boys, and should be interested in the work."<sup>196</sup> The scoutmaster was the highest authority for the boys and acted as an administrator. He was also theoretically Baden-Powell's representative on the ground, reflecting all the values the Movement was meant to possess. While encouraging Scouts to be

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<sup>194</sup> Baden-Powell, "Campfire Yarn, no. 4," *Scouting for Boys*, <[www.thedump.scoutscan.com](http://www.thedump.scoutscan.com)>, p. 32.

<sup>195</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: Original 1908 Edition*, p. 282.

<sup>196</sup> A B-P Scout, "Preliminary Training," *Scout's Pocketbook*, Scout Association Archives, Diaries, Record Books no. 85, p. 4.

self-reliant, the ranking scheme, modelled on the military's, reinforced an undemocratic system by which 'social betters' taught their subordinates proper lessons in citizenship and character. Again, encouraging self-reliance and individualism, boys were encouraged to act as moral guides to their Scouts.

All boys were encouraged to take up Scouting through their own initiative, yet they were given a ranking scheme around which to organise themselves. The highest rank at the local level was that of scoutmaster. As stated earlier, the scoutmaster had to be at least eighteen years of age and was in charge of two or more patrols. The origin stories above indicate that boys often sought out scoutmasters themselves, yet this was not always the case. It was common as well for adults to organise and recruit boys into troops they formed. Given the grassroots nature of the Movement, however, boys under eighteen did run and organise troops in an unofficial capacity before. The fifteen or sixteen-year-old Cyril Prince from Sutton, for example was named by his brother and fellow Scouts for starting and running patrols in 1910.<sup>197</sup> While not an official scoutmaster until several years later, Cyril Prince was an assistant scoutmaster and was instrumental in bringing boys together in his local community.<sup>198</sup> This discrepancy with the official rules again highlights Scouting as a social movement and demonstrates the importance of researching the lived experience of individuals at the ground level. Many troops were founded and functioned under 'adult' supervision, yet other examples show the contingent local examples of boys' agency in popularising the Movement.

Scoutmaster Jenkins from the Aston area of Birmingham reflected the importance of rank and order stressed by the official Scouting narrative. In his notes regarding a recent parade of several troops, he wrote about the 1<sup>st</sup> Edwardian Troop Aston Grammar School that "the boys looked very smart and their Scout-master put them through various exercises which

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<sup>197</sup> Ancliffe Prince, "1<sup>st</sup> Wallington," Scout Association Archives, TSA/GRO/COU/LON/2/1/A15/2.

<sup>198</sup> H.A. Prince, *Early Days*, pp. 1-6.

were all performed very well, and their quick obedience to orders and discipline were grand.”<sup>199</sup> Jenkins praised the boys for their abilities to follow orders in a military-style manner, reflecting Baden-Powell’s desire to instil British boys with values of discipline and order. Baden-Powell was explicit in his instructions to leaders on how they should present themselves, run patrols, and lead the boys under their care and instructed the leaders to give their troops “the *lead* and not the *push*.”<sup>200</sup> This Midlands troop demonstrates that obeying orders from a superior commander in an efficient and compliant manner was not merely rhetoric of Headquarters, but practiced at the local level.

There is a clear class dynamic at play here as well. Scoutmaster Jenkins continued to lavish praise on the 1<sup>st</sup> Edwardian Troop Aston Grammar School boys by writing “there is not a snob in the whole troop, and the manner in which they mixed with the members of my troop proved they were all true Scouts and little gentlemen, and we Aston Scouts are proud of them and their Scoutmaster.”<sup>201</sup> This passage suggests that Jenkins’ boys were from a more modest background than their grammar-school counterparts, yet he claimed they worked together. Again, reflecting the official line, Jenkins attempted to remove previous distinctions of class or financial privilege, and create a Scouting identity to trump other social status. Unfortunately, the voices of the individual boys in this particular case do not exist, so we cannot establish whether they shared Jenkins’s optimism. That a boy from the 1<sup>st</sup> Edwardian Troop saved this clipping suggests a level of pride in the accolades, but also an acceptance of the given praise concerning Scout identity. We cannot assume these boys shared Jenkins’s belief in the Movement’s ability to destroy perceived class prejudices, yet it

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<sup>199</sup> Scoutmaster Jenkins, *The 1<sup>st</sup> Edwardian (Aston) Troop of Boy Scouts: Documents, July 1909 – March, 1919*, “Scouting Notes,” Birmingham City Library, MS 4036/2. The exact date of this document cannot be determined for certain, comments Jenkins later about the King’s Scout rally, which took place in June of 1910, suggest this event occurred several years before the First World War.

<sup>200</sup> Baden-Powell, “Campfire Yarn, no, 4,” *Scouting for Boys*, p. 32.

<sup>201</sup> Jenkins, “Scouting Notes.”

does suggest that these boys from Aston brought these ideas into their experience with Scouting, even in a subconscious way.

Local leaders reflected Baden-Powell's instruction on leadership and often relayed his message in direct language. In a hand-drawn troop magazine, a Scout from Clapham encouraged his fellow Scouts to "try whistling, pass it on, be a brick, and (show) goodwill to all."<sup>202</sup> He suggested that scouts "print this in big letters, hang it up where it will always catch your eye, and try your best to abide by it the whole year through."<sup>203</sup> This consistent reinforcement demonstrated Scouting's infiltration into the lives of these boys. Scouting was not merely a hobby or extracurricular activity for these enthusiastic pioneers, but something that defined how they viewed themselves. Steeped in a language of hierarchy and intended to alleviate class tensions, Baden-Powell's message was engrained in the structure of the troops and fulfilled by the Scouts who shared his vision.

The same troop's scoutmaster also highlighted Scouting's official narrative on hierarchy through strict ranking procedures. W. J. Harvey gave his Scouts a list of rules to obey that reinforced proper etiquette on rank:

1. To salute all officers with the full salute and fellow scouts with the half salute.
2. To obey all officers' commands smartly.
3. Buglers do not carry staffs on route marches.
4. Scouts must make themselves familiar with the orders, which will be published monthly.
5. Special permission will have to be obtained before a scout can absent himself from any troop meeting.
6. Special permission will only be granted under very exceptional circumstances.<sup>204</sup>

First, it is important to note that these young Clapham leaders took Scouting seriously. They believed in the message, established and ran troops in an organised manner, and promoted the Scouting ethos through their works. These rules, written by the troop leaders for their boys

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<sup>202</sup> A Scout, *The Raven* (January 1909), Scout Association Archives, TSA/PER/100/1, p. 2.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid, p. 2.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid, p. 16.

reflected what many boys might have read in their personal Scout Pocketbook that warned Scouts “on no account should the scouts in the early or subsequent meetings be allowed to get the idea that things may be carried out in a ‘go as you please’ manner. The patrol leader should insist on discipline from the start and see that he gets it.”<sup>205</sup> As instructed, the leaders of the 5<sup>th</sup> Clapham established the distinction and hierarchy in rank from the outset. That these particular boys adopted hierarchical roles demonstrates the ways in which they replicated broader social positions of authority and Scouting’s power structures.

### **Industriousness, Vocational Experience, and Earning Awards**

The activities and awards Scouts earned reflected the vocational and industrious aspects of the Movement as much as local troops’ creation stories. Merit badges have become synonymous with the Boy Scouts over the last hundred years, yet their roots lie in Edwardian Scouting and its efforts to promote youth education and ideals of self-sufficiency and civic responsibility. The skills that were taught, the badges and rewards, as well as the boys’ responses to them, will help us understand how grassroots members thought the Movement might prepare them for adult life.

Thriftiness and earning money by one’s own efforts were often presented as middle-class virtues that represented social mobility and respectability; these ideas were crucial elements of Baden-Powell’s Scouting framework.<sup>206</sup> In *Scouting for Boys*, he encouraged readers to be thrifty make sure that he “saves every penny he can, and puts it into the bank, so that he may have money to keep himself when out of work, and thus not make himself a burden to others” and that if they die poor or rich, “it pretty well depends on your own

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<sup>205</sup> A B-P Scout, “Preliminary Training,” *Scout’s Pocketbook*, p. 10.

<sup>206</sup> See McKibbin, *The Ideologies of Class* and Bourke, *Working-Class Cultures*.



selves.”<sup>207</sup> Meanwhile Scout Law number nine reminded them that “A Scout is thrifty,” while scouts could achieve ‘Thriftyman,’ ‘Musician,’ and ‘Entertainer’ badges securing them the ability to make money for their troop through their own agency, what McKibbin cites as the middle-class way of “measuring how men controlled their lives.”<sup>208</sup> This emphasis on thrift and earning money through ones’ own initiative not only reflected Baden-Powell’s own Victorian ideology and situated the Movement within a larger class narrative, but it gave the boys encouragement to be agents in their own social development.

Scouts were not only encouraged to raise money for their troops themselves, but they were actively dissuaded from seeking outside funds or charity. Baden-Powell asserted that “funds must be earned by the Scouts themselves, by their work, not by begging.”<sup>209</sup> He outlined a variety of ways in which Scouts could and should earn money, while also stating ways in which they should not. Baden-Powell warned against gambling, writing that “some fellows see a fortune in betting on a horse race or football match; you may win a few shillings now and then but you are absolutely certain to lose half the time, and it is a fool's way of trying to make money.”<sup>210</sup> He continued to write that “such money is not earned, it is only gained by chance and therefore is not worth having—to a fellow with manly ideas,” linking thrift and proper money earning abilities with his conception of manhood and citizenship.<sup>211</sup> Scouts were encouraged to raise funds through public displays of entertainment or performing chores or works for members of the community. In teaching Scouts to earn money for themselves, Baden-Powell reinforced Victorian ideals of self-sufficiency, while contributed to image of the industrious British agent long portrayed in the imperial imagination.

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<sup>207</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: Original 1908 Edition*, p. 46 and “Campfire Yarn, no. 22,” *Scouting for Boys*, p. 188.

<sup>208</sup> McKibbin, *Ideologies of Class*, p. 176.

<sup>209</sup> Baden-Powell, “Preface,” *Scouting for Boys: Original 1908 Edition*.

<sup>210</sup> Baden-Powell, *Young Knights of the Empire*, p. 48.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

Alexander Fisher, through his works in various Scout troops, reflected Baden-Powell's desire for Scouts to earn their own money. Not only did he cite many instances where his troops earned money through plays and musical performances, but he directly appropriated Baden-Powell's writing on self-reliance and morality. Fisher wrote that while in the Boys' Brigade he collected £1/7/6 for camping expenditures in subscriptions from his friends. Upon joining Scouting, however, he claimed that "I was taught that it was by far the best and most manly way to work for any money required, not collect it from well-wishers."<sup>212</sup> He continued to uphold Scouting's sentiment by writing that "the boys in the Brigade need to have not subscribed one penny themselves for their week under canvas, whilst the scouts pay every penny themselves, and strange to say the scouts enjoy their holiday far better in consequence."<sup>213</sup> His appropriation of Baden-Powell's text demonstrates reader reception placed into practice by a young Scout, while his reflection of Baden-Powell's principles of earning money show a way in which he implemented the text into his troop and life.

The Scouting Movement also provided boys practical training for employment alongside their moral character building. Boys could earn badges in blacksmithing, carpentry, printing, and clerkship. While available badges in poultry farming and leatherworking highlighted Baden-Powell's ideological understanding of industriousness, vocational badges offered boys opportunities to train for possible careers. From his personal pocketbook, we can see that a Scout from Coventry named A. E. Hughes passed the electrician, laundryman, handyman, and clerk tests.<sup>214</sup> While it can be assumed that he performed the tests for variety of reasons, including fun, the requirements he had to accomplish did offer him familiarity with vocations he may not have been otherwise exposed.

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<sup>212</sup> Fisher, *My Life*, p. 8.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

<sup>214</sup> *Brown's Boy Scout Diary*, A. E. Hughes (Glasgow: James Brown & Son, 1921, Scout Association Archives, "Diaries, Record Books, no. 85.

Earning the Clerk badge meant he demonstrated good penmanship and hand-printing, the ability to use a typewriter, knowledge in book-keeping, and “write in shorthand from dictation at twenty words a minute as minimum.”<sup>215</sup> In 1911, almost ten percent of London’s working male population held clerk positions.<sup>216</sup> Scouting offered boys a head start at learning workplace skills, while simultaneously teaching them that work and personal character development were linked.

These badges as well prepared boys with workplace experience and attempted to give boys adult responsibilities. Headquarters taught boys that “an ounce of practice is worth a pound of theory” and as such encouraged Scouts to learn as much as they could from textual instruction, but that practical application of the skills is the best way to earn proficiency.<sup>217</sup> The abilities in which these boys had to be proficient, good penmanship, typing, and bookkeeping, were also encouraged as part of their day-to-day Scouting exercises. The author of an article in the 17 October 1908 issue of *The Scout* instructed its young readers that a good diary will exhibit “good handwriting, showing observation and ability to describe in a few words things that would be of interest to other people, or to the writer, himself, in after years.”<sup>218</sup> The author stressed that good record keeping is “an art that is well worth cultivating and that will almost always come in useful to a man.”<sup>219</sup> Again, the emphasis is placed on the “usefulness” or practical application of the skill. Not only is the utilitarian nature of the Scouting Movement apparent in the Clerk training award, but it also encouraged its members to begin thinking about their future as citizens of Britain and as adults in the workforce.

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<sup>215</sup> *Scout Tests and how to Pass Them*, p. 74.

<sup>216</sup> Michael Heller, “Work, Income, and Stability: The Late Victorian and Edwardian London Male Clerk Revisited,” *Business History*, 50.3 (May 2008), p. 255.

<sup>217</sup> *Scout Tests and how to pass them*, p. 174.

<sup>218</sup> *The Scout*, “Scouts’ Diaries” (17 October 1908), Scout Association Archives, TSA/PUB/4/1.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*

Baden-Powell and other adult authority figures, from authors to military officials, lavished praise on Scouts who transcended their childhood status and acted like mature citizens. As argued above, ‘class’ or privileged elements greatly influenced the Movement’s trajectory in that working-class characteristics were portrayed as vulgar personal failures to be rejected in favour of perceived middle-class virtues of industriousness and cleanliness. While this tension between boys from a privileged background and the economically excluded was at the centre of much of the Scouting experience, successfully graduating from childhood to adulthood was the Movement’s ultimate goal. Scouts often put their knowledge of cooking, bivouacking, and fire starting to the test while they participated in camping trips and retreats, yet the various skills learned as part of the Clerk training were used in everyday Scout record keeping. Troop minute books and the boys’ diaries themselves are examples of practical applications of Scout lessons. Furthermore, the manner and style in which they were often recorded demonstrates Scouts’ appropriation of Baden-Powell’s language and design.

Chapter six of this thesis, ‘Scouts go to War’, will show how boys used camping and rifle shooting to train for careers or service in the military, however, at this stage it is necessary to highlight how the more mundane tasks of keeping minute books and records reflected the vocational aspects of Scouting. Baden-Powell wrote that the “boys themselves should manage club affairs, as far as possible, by committees, and putting boys in responsible charge of room, equipment, papers, etc.”<sup>220</sup> Reflecting the importance of note taking, the 17 October 1908 issue of *The Scout* ran a chastising piece scolding boys for not keeping a diary to their superiors’ liking. The article stated that a boy “summed up his appreciation of, say, Chipchase Castle, with all its romance and fighting history and its grim and gloomy appearance, in a laconic sentence to the effect that, ‘We went and saw Chipchase Castle and

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<sup>220</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: Original 1908 Edition*, p. 309.

got back to Warle for dinner.”<sup>221</sup> While many surviving Scout diaries do indeed read as if they were written in a lackadaisical manner, this editorial demonstrates the desire to make sure all components of Scouting went towards personal, vocational, and character development. Looking at the minute books and troop records of Scouts reveal how these boys appropriated writing styles and meeting structures to give their Scouting experience a more official tone. Indeed, the importance these boys placed on the Movement and their positions within is reflected in the officious nature of their record keeping. While more mundane records concerning attendance and meeting recapitulations may lack in obvious significance compared to writings that detailed trading weapons for military training purposes, they do reflect the personal progression aspects inspired by Headquarters that took place in the everyday function of the Scout meeting halls. Baden-Powell designed games and activities for Scouts that would prepare young boys and men for adult citizenship, while the simple act of note-taking and recording demonstrates how Scouting was a legitimate association for these boys.

These records also indicate a level of professionalism and performance among active Scouts that could be seen very early on in the Movement. A 1909 minute book compiled by the 1<sup>st</sup> Edwardian Midlands Troop demonstrates the serious manner in which these often conducted themselves through Scouting. The book contains troop origin and official registration dates, names and addresses of each member, and details of the practical and ideological creation of the patrol. The book also laid out specific rules boys must obey in order to gain acceptance in the patrol and maintain membership. The detail and level of officiousness in these rules highlight the importance these boys ascribed to the Movement. For example, rule number three stated “to join the troop it is necessary for the candidate to 1. Obtain the consent of captain or lieutenant” and “also promise to obey our rules, the Scout

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<sup>221</sup> “Scouts’ Diaries, *The Scout*, 27.2 (17 October 1908).

laws.”<sup>222</sup> Likewise, rule nine required that “all Scouts & privates must be present at all announcement parade meetings—unless stated to be optional...continued absence renders the offender liable to dismissal or degradation. Such dismissal or degradation shall be made only [by] the captain or Court of Honour.”<sup>223</sup> Given this book was created in 1909, largely before all troops were brought under a closely monitored authority from headquarters suggests these rules were designed by the boys themselves, albeit inspired from Baden-Powell’s textual encouragement. Strict warnings like these for Scouts to obey the rules suggests these young leaders conducted their troop in a very official manner and viewed Scouting as the Movement Baden-Powell intended it be, not as merely an opportunity for fun and games.

Likewise, the leaders of the 5<sup>th</sup> Clapham Troop, while not as strict as their comrades in the Midlands, stressed the importance of note taking and diary keeping. Following along from the available Movement texts and instructions on the issues, Patrol Leader Mason gave his Scouts a list of instructions and notes to consider when writing a report:

- 1). In making your report, whether by writing or by word of mouth, keep to the points you have been ordered to report on.
- 2). Word it just as you would a telegram.
- 3). Write clearly, because the officer receiving your message may have to read it by the light of a match.
- 4). Remember you are reporting to an officer who has never seen the country you are working over: so don’t assume he knows all you do about it.
- 5). Don’t cut down your report to the extent of leaving out information that applies to what you have been told to reconnoitre.
- 6). Only report facts, not fancies.
- 7). Always give the hour of sending off your message, as well as the date.<sup>224</sup>

We can see from this text how important note keeping was to the leaders of this troop. The language, while evoking a military tone, suggests extreme consequences if reporting was to

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<sup>222</sup> *The 1<sup>st</sup> Edwardian Troop of Boy Scouts: Log Book and Record*, “Troop Rules,” Library of Birmingham, MS 4036/1.

<sup>223</sup> *Edwardian Troop: Log Book*, “Troop Rules.”

<sup>224</sup> M.B. Mason, *The Raven*, “Reporting” (April 1909), Scout Association Archives, TSA/PER/100/1. \*The various inconsistencies in numeration and punctuation were deliberate representations of the original text.

be conducted in an inappropriate manner. What is crucial from this example, is the level of appropriation evident in this boy's message. Likewise, given that many Scouts and leaders came from clerical or professional classes, the emphasis on note-keeping and troop management in Scouting at the local level reflected boys' backgrounds as much as their ideological positions. Mason is not only following the Movement's mission to prepare boys for vocations in adulthood, which in this case appears to be military training, but is disseminating Headquarters' message found in merit badge requirements, official publications, and Baden-Powell's own text.

The minute books, like other training and national service aspects of the Movement that will be explored in the next chapters, became even more sophisticated throughout the First World War years—official minute books were even available to purchase through Scout Headquarters, indicating the rapid transition from movement to organisation that occurred during these early years. The local records of a Broughton, Lancashire troop demonstrate the nation-wide progression of Scouting from movement to institution. In an example from a minute book that read “It was proposed by the Assistant Scoutmaster and seconded by Gilbert Fell that they go to Horden at whit week which was carried in the usual way. As there was no other business of importance the meeting closed with the usual vote of thanks to the chairman,” we can see these boys placed a great amount of importance not only on record keeping, but that they conducted their activities in a manner fitting with official duties.<sup>225</sup> This troop treated their juvenile excursions with professionalism, which indicates the level of significance these boys place on their Scouting activities. This process of character and development was not only attempted through games and health practices, but through the prescribed style and structure in which Scout minute books were kept. The structure and officious nature of these minute books indicates that these boys not only viewed themselves

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<sup>225</sup> Broughton Minute Book, Manchester Central Library, L180/5/3/1-18, 16 March 1918.

contributing to something worth recording in great detail, but that it was beyond fun and games.

In southeast England, the boys of the 1st Wallington Troop likewise treated their meetings and minute books with a similar seriousness as their comrades in Lancashire. After taking attendance, the treasurer recorded that “the minutes of the three previous meetings were read and duly passed & signed as correct...the treasurer then presented his report, which was followed by that of the S/M [scoutmaster].”<sup>226</sup> That the scoutmaster signed off on the report indicates a certain level of control and authority present in the meetings, as well as an example of how Scouts emulated adult practices and conduct in their Scouting activities. The boys were encouraged to take notes and record minutes, yet this particular troop expanded the process and made it a mandatory procedure. In this particular, 15 September 1915 meeting, the boys discussed attendance at parades, inventory, and spent a considerable amount of time on funding issues.<sup>227</sup> Given that Scouting promoted individualism, troops were largely left to raise funds themselves. That the 1<sup>st</sup> Wallington Troops’ dedicated much of their meetings to discussions about raising money reflects Baden-Powell’s ideology and guidelines playing out at the ground level. Furthermore, fundraising also forces a level of maturity on the boys, making the simple act of bookkeeping and creation of minute books a key aspect of citizen training.

Baden-Powell’s emphasis on self-reliance through independent fund earning reflected the movement nature of Scouting: a movement built from ideology and vision, rather than a concerted effort from the top to produce an organisation. After the First World War, nationwide fundraising campaigns took place to earn money for local troops. A troop record from the 7<sup>th</sup> Wallasey Boy Scouts shows a letter written in gratitude for donations that contributed to forming the troop in 1919, while a funds drive and dance, organised by ‘The

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<sup>226</sup> *Group Committee Minutes: 1<sup>st</sup> Wallington Troop*, Scout Association Archives, TSA/GRO/COU/LON/2/1/LOG/5, 15 September, 1915.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*



Ladies Committee (*sic*),’ raised nearly 64% of total funds the troop needed to purchase musical instruments.<sup>228</sup> The Boy Scouts in this situation not only failed to work for their money in the manner Baden-Powell described, or like their Edwardian forbearers, but they did not even organise the funds-drive themselves. Likewise in 1919, Scout Treasurer H. Heywood Noble across the River Mersey in Liverpool appealed to supporters for donations totalling £5,000 in order to start a capital fund, marking a clear departure from Scouting’s self-reliance ideology.<sup>229</sup> In the 1940s, an official Boy Scout organisation pamphlet entitled *The Future of Scouting is Under a Cloud*, Baden-Powell was posthumously quoted to have said “that we are in desperate needs of funds” and that before he died he “wanted to see our ship well found.”<sup>230</sup> This change in the nature of fundraising not only demonstrated the transition from movement to organisation, but the divergence further highlights youth agency in the pre-war years. Boys like Alexander Fisher from Manchester and Corram Castle from Crouch End, guided by Baden-Powell’s lessons, raised money themselves and set the tone for their troop activities. These individuals, as much as any figure at the top, shaped the nature of the Movement during the Edwardian period.

The issues of financial self-reliance, seen repeatedly in official Scouting rhetoric at the time, prompts two main questions: what attempts Edwardian Scouting really made to promote class equality through material benefits and how boys from less privileged backgrounds experienced the Movement. While Scouting promoted values self-reliance, discipline, fraternity, and patriotism, the Movement’s function in England did not have the class-inclusive effect many officials proclaimed it would. Work from scholars like Michael Rosenthal have even argued that Baden-Powell’s attempt to alleviate class tension was really an effort to instil the values of the upper class onto the poor and working populations.

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<sup>228</sup> Helen M. Gill, *An Early History of the 7<sup>th</sup> Wallasey Boy Scouts (Formerly St. Mary’s Own)*, Liverpool Central Library, H369 430942751.

<sup>229</sup> H. Haywood Noble, *Appeal for Funds: £5000 Wanted*, Liverpool Central Library, 367 MYA/B/16/20oo.

<sup>230</sup> *The Future of Scouting is Under a Cloud*, Liverpool Central Library, 367MYA/B/16/20rr.

Scouting officials like Kitchener and Baden-Powell brought “to the study of youth their own biases and classes needs,” Rosenthal argues, which eliminated perceived ‘working-class’ cultural traits.<sup>231</sup> Baden-Powell’s own writings indicate a level of distrust and distain for the working class—from his condemnation of football culture and music hall, ideas that will be explored in greater detail in the next chapter—I suggest that regardless of official intensions from the top, the opportunity to experience Scouting fully and to continue into later age largely depended on one’s financial and privileged abilities to do so.

Baden-Powell wrote that “if you are divided amongst yourselves you are doing harm to your country. You must sink your differences. If you despise other boys because they belong to a poorer home than yourself you are a snob. If you hate other boys because they happen to be born richer than you, you are a fool.”<sup>232</sup> So central was this idea, that Baden-Powell created Scout Law # 4, ‘A scout is a friend to all and a brother to every other scout, no matter to what social class the other belongs,’ enshrining the idea of class-inclusion in the official rules and ephemera and demonstrating the reality of class contentions in Edwardian society. While any boy could join at Scout level, rising in the ranks became more prohibited due to practical reasons. Turning to one of these practical elements now, we can see that various obstacles existed that had the potential to block participation for poorer boys.

### **Scouting’s Material Costs and Exclusion**

Maurice Gamon, scoutmaster and founder of a London area troop, wrote an instructional book to Scout leaders when he was about thirty years of age in which he said “above all, the Scout uniform absolutely destroys class distinction,” and notes that “the Public School boy

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<sup>231</sup> Rosenthal, *Character Factory*, p. 90.

<sup>232</sup> Baden-Powell, “Our Duties as Citizens, Campfire Yarn No. 26,” *Scouting for Boys*, p. 213.

wearing it is on the same level with the boy from the slum.”<sup>233</sup> Contrary to Scoutmaster Gamon’s idealistic words, many historians position the Scouting Movement as a middle-class phenomenon, yet they generally root their findings in the founder and top officials’ rhetoric and texts, as stated in this chapter’s introduction. Tammy Proctor’s excellent work examining the material costs of the Scouts and Guides at various levels of membership, highlight the clear class and gender divides that made the classless notion of Scouting all but fantasy.<sup>234</sup> While her focus is largely on the interwar years, she does highlight the divisions between organisations and troops and contemporary criticism of Headquarters’ handling of the ‘class issue’, notably in London’s East End.<sup>235</sup> This superficial veil of classlessness may have portrayed those in a patrol as social equals to the community, but backgrounds and ‘class identities’ would not have been lost on the boys themselves—nor would they have been in a small community. As Scouting began as a movement to which boys brought their family influences and social conditioned ideals with them, we must keep these localised dynamics and inter-troop relationships in mind.

An official uniform or outfitters did not exist at the outset of the Movement, yet Baden-Powell did state details of how a Scout should dress:

Flat brimmed hat if possible, or wide-awake hat.  
 Coloured handkerchief tied loosely round neck.  
 Shirt: Flannel.  
 Colours: A bunch of ribbons of patrol colour on left shoulder.  
 Belt, with coat rolled tight and strapped or tied on to it behind.  
 Haversack: To carry food, etc., slung on back across the shoulders.  
 Shorts: Trousers cut short at knee. A kilt if you are a Scotsman.  
 Stockings, with garters made of green braid, with one end hanging down one inch.  
 Boots or shoes.  
 Staff as high as scout’s shoulder. Not shod, as it is for feeling the way at night quietly.  
 Badge on left arm above elbow.

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<sup>233</sup> Maurice Gamon, *The Spirit of Scouting* (London: The Pilgrim Press, 1914), 18-19, Scout Association Archives, TSA/PUB/2/1/GAM/1/1.

<sup>234</sup> Tammy Proctor, “(Uni)forming Youth: Girl Guides and Boy Scouts in Britain, 1908-39,” *History Workshop Journal*, 45 (Spring, 1998), pp. 103-104.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 113-116.

Whistle, with cord round neck for patrol leader.<sup>236</sup>

Scouting was available for all boys to participate regardless of class, creed, or race, but dependent on wardrobe. Full inclusion must be understood as the equal ability for all boys to achieve rank, badges, and engage in all activities. In the first few months after *Scouting for Boys* was published, boys wore their own clothes and fashioned uniforms largely from their imagined idea of what a Scout uniform should look like. The boys of the 1<sup>st</sup> Wallington Troop, for example, wore “white cricket shirts...cut down trousers or blue football shorts, ‘cycling’ stockings and white or blue linen sun hats, or prizes of prizes, soft felt slouch hats of the Volunteer or ex-Boer War type.”<sup>237</sup> Furthermore, the materials these boys used to fashion their early uniforms also suggests the 1<sup>st</sup> Wallington Scouts came from financial affluence, which again highlights the backgrounds of boys drawn to Edwardian Scouting. Like the Movement as a whole during the first years, these clothing and equipment requirements were more of a frame in which boys were allowed to produce the uniforms themselves. However, new requirements and the commercialisation of Scouting soon mandated clothing and equipment. Those who could not afford the kit could not advance their Scouting experience any further. Officially licensed uniform requirements and material costs had the potential to block membership and assent; it as well as demonstrates the broader Victorian and Edwardian ideals of industriousness engrained within Scouting. The Scout uniform was intended to distinguish Scouts from other boys, make them visible to a wider public, and, most importantly where this chapter is concerned, blur class distinctions. However, regardless Gamon’s hopes for a movement based in economic equality, class was more conspicuous than he stated.

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<sup>236</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: Original 1908 Edition*, p. 40.

<sup>237</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Wallington Troop, “The Early Years,” Scout Association Archive, TSA/GRO/COU/LON/2/1/A15/2.

Material prohibitions limited individuals from non-privileged backgrounds from fully participating in Scouting. Scout clothing and equipment is a potent example of how traditional financial barriers infiltrated the Movement. Parsons notes that in adopting a uniform, Baden-Powell sought to blur class distinctions through surface conformity.<sup>238</sup> Sam Pryke too argues that Scout Headquarters made no official attempt to incorporate class distinctions in the troops and while it represented ideally masculine and paternalistic values of the public school, “Scouting provided something of an alternative to the stuffiness and conformity of the gaping class divisions of the age.”<sup>239</sup> Pryke, however, relies largely on the testimony of several middle and upper-class boys, including those involved in the initial Brownsea Rally, where Baden-Powell deliberately mixed boys from various backgrounds, who may not have otherwise socialised in grassroots Scouting in the rest of the country. Unfortunately, testimony from working-class and poorer boys from the pre-war period are rare in an already scarce source base, so it is difficult to gauge their reaction to Scouting’s attempt to blur class distinctions. While Pryke acknowledges pre-war Scouting was dominated by boys from financially privileged backgrounds due to uniform and equipment costs, he places too large of an emphasis on official rhetoric of class inclusion and does not explore the impact of institutionalised social barriers that middle-class Scouts brought with them.<sup>240</sup> Again, we must look at the lived experience of Scouting to better gauge how it impacted those who participated. Looking at the specific material cost of Scouting may illuminate why less financially privileged voices are seldom heard: they were prevented from participating in the Movement due to their inability to afford the basic items of membership. Not only did boys bring with them their previously held and socially shaped prejudices with them, as demonstrated previously, the uniforms themselves were symbols of class exclusion, despite Parsons’s suggestion to the contrary.

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<sup>238</sup> Parsons, *Race, Resistance, and the Boy Scout Movement*, p. 23.

<sup>239</sup> Pryke, “Popularity of Nationalism,” p. 322.

<sup>240</sup> Pryke, “Popularity of Nationalism,” p. 321.

Furthermore, as stated above, Scouting's official line directed the boys to earn money for the troop through public works and performances, not through charity. While raising funds through service was a large part of troop activity, the practical experience of raising money, however, did not always follow the Chief Scout's instructions. The boys from Sutton for example, bought their first uniforms with their own pocket money, not through service.<sup>241</sup> Likewise, a boy named J. L. Moore from the same area stated that a woman named Mrs. Rickett supported the local boys through land and material donations.<sup>242</sup> On the surface, this reflects that boys enacted the Movement on their own terms and chose which parts of the official line to follow. If we look into the boys using their own or their families' money for their Scouting needs a bit deeper, it we can see that boys with greater access to disposable income would have had an easier time participating in the Movement. This chapter will now examine the material costs of Scouting in order to demonstrate that expensive equipment and clothing expenses potentially made full participation in the Movement less accessible for boys from less financially privileged backgrounds.

Even Alexander Fisher, the Manchester Scout who we saw earlier espousing the merits of earning one's own money, had his mom buy *Scouting for Boys* for him.<sup>243</sup> Also, Scout Nicholls, who I mentioned in the previous chapter, ended the letter to his mother by asking her to send him pocket money and train fare and reminded her to bring in his copy of *The Scout* when it was delivered to their home.<sup>244</sup> Realities of age and economic position were great determining factors in the ways in which boys operated within the Scouting Movement, regardless of official rhetoric from Baden-Powell or the sentiment they left in their records. Likewise, the realities of accessibility to Scouting's basic material requirements were often deterrents for full inclusion into the Movement.

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<sup>241</sup> H. A. Prince, *Early Days*, p. 1.

<sup>242</sup> J. L. Moore, "1<sup>st</sup> Wallington," Scout Association Archives, TSA/GRO/COU/LON/2/1/A15/2.

<sup>243</sup> Fisher, *My Life*, p. 10.

<sup>244</sup> "Nicholls."

It is necessary to analyse material costs in order to show the practical elements involved, as well as give a sense of how prohibitive Scouting could be for individuals from poorer family backgrounds, especially if they wanted to rise in the ranks. The official Scouting magazine, *The Scout*, stated that “the minimum uniform required is a hat, haversack, staff, and shoulder knot, all of which can be obtained from the Boy Scouts Headquarters.”<sup>245</sup> Official publications, like other boys’ magazines and journals at the time, were filled with advertisements for goods relating to Scouting, such as whistles, shoe adhesive, and air rifles. An advertisement from Stockwin & Company, an official outfitter for the Scouting Movement, offered many essential and extra products for scouts. The required gear cost boys’ a reasonable 6/4.<sup>246</sup> In order for a Scout to be fully equipped, however, it would cost him £4/4/4.<sup>247</sup> An average clerk’s salary, for example, at the London and County Bank in 1909 was little over £200, making the full cost of equipping one boy with material from this company around 2% of a father’s total income.<sup>248</sup> While Scouts did not have to buy everything in a catalogue, clear demarcations in boys’ family incomes would have arisen depending on the amount of kit one possessed.

Costs only became more expensive in the upper ranks of the Movement. Stockwin & Company advertised scoutmaster’s gear costs at £3/5/3.<sup>249</sup> This expense, plus traveling between patrols, leading boys on trips, and other various organisation costs, made being a scoutmaster a fairly expensive position. While working-class boys did participate in Scouting, albeit in smaller numbers, costs were undoubtedly prohibitive to many people, regardless of local fundraising initiatives that may have occurred. Most significantly, the scoutmaster’s clothing and equipment costs alone indicated that social inequality in positions of authority was reflected in the Scouting Movement’s ranking scheme. Given these costs

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<sup>245</sup> *The Scout*, 6.132 (22 October 1910).

<sup>246</sup> *Scout Tests and how to pass them*, Book Jacket.

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>248</sup> Heller, “Work, Income, and Stability,” p. 258.

<sup>249</sup> *Scout Tests and how to pass them*, Book Jacket.

and evidence of individual family backgrounds for the leaders documented in surviving sources, we can conclude that the earliest troops consisted of boys from many social backgrounds in the lower ranks, yet boys and young men from secure, white-collar backgrounds filled the leadership positions.

Likewise, an advertisement in a 1913 issue of the *Headquarters' Gazette*, the Scout's official magazine, illustrates the high costs associated with the Movement from Scouting's official outfitters. A basic Scout uniform, complete with shirt, shorts, staff, and several basic Scouting items cost 15s.<sup>250</sup> Again, if we compare this cost to a clerk's annual salary of £200 per year, the required items for participation would not have been extravagant. This cost, however, was just for the basic materials. If we factor in these costs, along with the price of three badges, four books on basic Scouting skills, and some other common items boys would have used in their activities, the cost for a reasonably expected list of materials from the official supplier becomes £1/9/7.<sup>251</sup> The issue here is not just participation, but how access to these materials illuminated class and economic divisions within troops.

Adding to the previously purchased items, there were specific uniform pieces and materials required of patrol leaders. This additional cost of £1/2s for patrol leader hat, stripes, as well as supplemental instructional materials for camping, First-Aid, and minute keeping increased the likelihood of poorer boys being inhibited from participation and rank ascension.<sup>252</sup> Practical elements of cost as well reinforced Rosenthal's accusation that Baden-Powell and Scout Headquarters designed the Movement to position upper-class boys at the top in order to train their socially inferior counterparts in character building.<sup>253</sup> Baden-Powell's intent, however does not matter nearly as much as how these issues were lived by people at the local level. Regardless of intent, the high financial price of Scouting increased

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<sup>250</sup> "Boy Scout Headquarters Price List," *Headquarters' Gazette* (April, 1913), Scout Association Archives, HQG/1913-04/Insert.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> Rosenthal, *Character Factory*, pp. 88-107.



the likely effect of economically disadvantaged boys from earning leadership positions in the Movement.

Finally, the role of Scoutmaster was not only designed for boys and men over eighteen, but the cost of the materials associated with the position meant only one with disposable income could take on the job. Scoutmaster clothing, along with a few publications and parent consent forms available through the Headquarters' store would have cost someone £4/14/11, making the expenditure 2.4% of an average clerk's yearly salary.<sup>254</sup> This would have been a very expensive cost for a clerk and all but impossible for people earning less. Scoutmasters such as John Andrews, who according to one of his subordinates earned "every badge that you could possible gain" would have paid a considerable amount indeed.<sup>255</sup> Sea Scouts, as well as decorated King's Scout also had additional costs for badges and clothes, which again highlights the increased cost of progression in the Movement. These costs not only reflect the exclusionary aspects of Scouting for less financially privileged boys, but also demonstrate how leadership positions were dominated by members of the upper classes.

We must also consider other likely costs occurred in the natural and basic experience of Scouting, not least of which is replacing worn or outgrown clothes. Additional costs for troop equipment like pots, pans, musical instruments, tools, and patrol flags, as well as meeting hall rent and travel expenditures each contributed to the cost of Scouting. Scouting was also often a family activity, where brothers participated with each other.<sup>256</sup> A family might then have the burden of supplying more than one child with equipment. Adding these costs together demonstrates the financial restrictions of Scouting for many Edwardian boys. Accumulating a large proportion of the materials was all but impossible. One did not need every item listed available to Scouts, yet discrepancies and glaring differences in equipment

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<sup>254</sup> "Price List," *Headquarters' Gazette*.

<sup>255</sup> Moore, "1<sup>st</sup> Wallington."

<sup>256</sup> The accounts of Francis and Ted Neate from Sutton, as well as the Redgraves, Gabriels, and Castles from North London demonstrate the familial nature of Scouting at the local level.

and clothes would have been evident among the boys.<sup>257</sup> These differences in material possession reflected the hierarchies of privilege in Edwardian Britain and show that regardless of Scouting's official rhetoric on class destruction.

For Jack Dorgan, the uniform served as a symbol of respectability and pride. Unlike most Scouts at the time, Dorgan was from a financially poor background. Born into a mining family in Northumbria in 1893, Jack recalled being “brought up on rice pudding and broth” and that he could not “remember ever often having meat.”<sup>258</sup> He stated that his parents wanted more economic opportunities for him than what he experienced as a child. When Jack was thirteen, his mother worked out an arrangement with the local school master so he could stay on with his studies. He remembered that his mother told the school master “Jack, my son, I think is worth something better than going down the coal mine.”<sup>259</sup> With this background in mind, it is understandable that when Baden-Powell came to town to give a presentation for his Scouting scheme in 1907, a year before *Scouting for Boys* was published, Dorgan was receptive to the General's message of improvement and opportunity. He was however, most attracted to Scouting and the presentation because of the boys closer to his own age Baden-Powell had with him, each dressed in colonial scouting uniforms, during the speech.<sup>260</sup> The uniform was a symbol of aspiration for Dorgan. Recalling that he “couldn't go to the church school because [he] didn't have the clothes,” it is understandable that he noticed and was inspired by the boys' striking attire.<sup>261</sup> The uniform was a powerful image and tool for Scouts and other members of the community. Tammy Proctor observes that “working-class members especially, the movements [Boy Scouts and Girl Guides] represented social mobility, education, and travel, but often also a betrayal of community mores, political principles, and family life” and that “donning a Scout or Guide uniform set a

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<sup>257</sup> Proctor, “(Uni)Forming Youth,” p. 104.

<sup>258</sup> Dorgan, *IWM Interview*.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid.

child apart, which could be both liberating and isolating.”<sup>262</sup> Not only did Scouts represent themselves with their clothing and equipment, but, as Proctor suggest, boys often found their associations with Scouting isolating. However, this was not only experienced by working-class boys in their neighbourhoods, but with other Scouts encountering non-Scouts in public spaces.

### **Fighting with ‘local lads’ and non-Scouts’**

To conclude this chapter, I will briefly examine Scouts’ interactions with other boys who were not involved with Scouting or other youth movements. Looking at Scouts’ relations with other Edwardian boys not involved in Scouting reveals important elements of perceived class dynamics. This chapter, as well as the next, demonstrates many of the involved Scouts took it upon themselves to disseminate morality and character building lessons to their peers. Looking at confrontational encounters with other boys will not only highlight certain class tensions playing out through youth antagonism, but show how certain Scouts were not always as receptive to Scouting’s rhetoric of class inclusion as they were with other aspects of the Movement. While ‘snobbishness’ is a difficult attitude to judge, there is evidence to suggest that some boys viewed themselves in a more elevated position to others their own age, because of their Scout status. There were occasions recorded when Boy Scouts and other youth verbally and physically clashed in public spaces. Conflicts between groups of boys, as stated in Robert MacDonald’s excellent work concerning Scouts on the Empire’s frontiers, further emphasised the class dynamics surrounding the Movement.<sup>263</sup> MacDonald observes that many working-class boys found Scouting’s “middle-class morality

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<sup>262</sup> Proctor, “(Uni)forming Youth,” p. 104.

<sup>263</sup> MacDonald, *Sons of Empire*, p. 11.

patronising...identified Scouts as 'stuck up,' and jeered at Scout troops in the street."<sup>264</sup>

While perceptions of snobbishness or pettier, surface issues contributed to conflict, as MacDonald indicates, ideology as well led to youth tension.

I want to push further MacDonald's assertion of working-class perception of Scouts and suggest that many boys in the Movement did indeed reflect attitudes of uniqueness and superiority based on their Scout association. While it manifested itself in petty fights between boys in playgrounds and community spaces, recollections of Edwin Bigwood, First World War veteran and former Scout, suggest ideas of superiority were carried over into other aspects of these Scout's lives. Bigwood stated that "we felt we were more important than the others [those who were not previously Scouts] because we knew the rules more."<sup>265</sup> While military aspects of Scouting will be explored in the final two chapters of this thesis, it is important here to note instances where Scouts clashed with other boys and to briefly examine the official narrative of the Movement that espoused the moral superiority of boys involved in Scouting.

Given that Scouting itself was founded to combat perceived social immorality and degeneration of Edwardian Britain, condemnations were placed on those associated with said perceptions. Scouting's very existence placed a marker for socially upright behaviour, while condemning those who did not follow suit. Baden-Powell's sketches of the slouching boy, speeches, and press editorials too reflect Scouting's superiority. Such expressions of class and Scout superiority became subjects of scorn and satire for critics of the Movement. P.G. Wodehouse's *The Swoop* (1909) reflected pretensions of many involved in Scouting:

Clarence was a sturdy lad of some fourteen summers. He was neatly, but not gaudily, dressed in a flat-brimmed hat, a coloured handkerchief, a flannel shirt, a bunch of ribbons, a haversack, football shorts, brown boots, a whistle, and a hockey-stick. He was, in fact, one of General Baden-Powell's Boy Scouts.

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<sup>264</sup> Ibid.

<sup>265</sup> Interview with Edwin C. Bigwood, *Interview with Edwin C. Bigwood* (Interview by Peter M. Hart for the Imperial War Museum, 1988), The Imperial War Museum, Catalogue no. 10115, <<http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80009896>>.

Scan him closely. Do not dismiss him with a passing glance; for you are looking at the Boy of Destiny, at Clarence MacAndrew Chugwater, who saved England.<sup>266</sup>

This image of Scouting, satirised through Chugwater, was the image boys like Bigwood and the patrols from Sutton aspired to emulate through dress and activities. It was not only the Scout Movement that was the subject of ridicule to Wodehouse, but real-life Chugwaters like Bighouse, Alexander Fisher from Manchester, and many others. Back on the local level, these dynamics were reflected in the lived experience of boys' Scouting association. In Wallington, Scout Cyril W. Pentecost's recalled an instance when he and his fellow Scouts were confronted by a group of local boys. He stated that he and the Scouts used to gather near "a slum area known as Jerusalem" and that one day a "real rough lot" from the area confronted the scoutmaster and claimed his Scouts were swearing at them.<sup>267</sup> Pentecost does not refute the accusation in his testimony, nor does he say it occurred; he simply stated the Scouts were playing. He did say that their scoutmaster "called us out of there," "as he thought there might be trouble brewing."<sup>268</sup> While we do not know the details of the incident in question, Pentecost's testimony placed the emphasis on the other boys. Furthermore, he notes their living conditions and economic situation as an explanation for their 'rough' behaviour and paints them in direct opposition to himself and the Scouting principles to which he aspired. We are left with an 'us versus them' situation that contradicts Scouting's official rhetoric, yet illuminates the inherent class mentalities that boys brought with them from society at large.

Scout Alwyn Dawson of the 1<sup>st</sup> Chiswick Troop as well recorded an instance of tension between his patrol and other boys. He wrote that on the way home from a trip, they "met a

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<sup>266</sup> P.G. Wodehouse, *The Swoop! Or how Clarence Saved England: A Tale of the Great Invasion* (1909), Project Gutenberg (2012).

<sup>267</sup> Cyril W. Pentecost, "1<sup>st</sup> Wallington," Scout Association Archives, TSA/GRO/COU/LON/2/1/A15/2.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid.

tough crowd of the local boys who...jeer[ed] and pelt[ed] us.”<sup>269</sup> Dawson maintained that the Scouts “never started fights,” but defended themselves against those who would bully or harass them,” echoing Baden-Powell’s rhetoric about chivalry.<sup>270</sup> Dawson depicted his Scouts performing something worthwhile for the community and that their moral character allowed them to take the morally superior position. The boys fighting against them, therefore, seemed to fight for no other reason than to prevent the Scouts from doing their duty, according to the young Scout. There are rough class dimensions at play here, but what is most important here is the image in which Dawson saw himself and his troops’ role in society. The Scouts were contributing to society in a manner that was unusual and greater than other boys in their community. What these instances of tension represent, therefore, are not only broader social struggles involving labour and ‘class identity’ manifesting themselves in various incarnations of youth culture, but a representation of how individual Scouts viewed themselves in society and against other boys.

This thesis takes the position that Scouting, as stated earlier, was linked with Victorian and Edwardian ideals prevalent among many within the middle classes and supported by upper-class interests to preserve the Empire, alleviate class tensions, and instil in boys around the country a character based largely from Baden-Powell’s own understanding of citizenship. When boys aspired to achieve status in Scouting or promote Scouting ideals, they contributed to a prevailing class-based discourse. Again, Proctor’s research demonstrates the class tensions that arose when working-class boys became alienated by their own communities and adopted the uniform of a movement that supposedly represented the values of the middle class.<sup>271</sup> This perception of snobbishness, however, was not always unfounded. As the examples above from the Scouts themselves demonstrate, class stereotypes and cliché descriptions of working-class boys permeated Scout testimonies and recollections. Even if

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<sup>269</sup> Dawson, *1<sup>st</sup> Chiswick Story*, p. 5.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid, p. 6.

<sup>271</sup> Proctor, “(Uni)forming Youth,” p. 104.

uniforms and Scout codes had the potential to destroy class tensions, unaffiliated boys were still subject to traditional judgment.

## **Conclusion**

While Baden-Powell gave instructions and guidance from the top, boys often operated and formed troops through their own understanding of the Movement. This often reflected the hopes of the authority, yet through their own agency boys chose which elements of Scouting best suited their own needs. Likewise, examining the boys' testimonies and troop texts reveals that financially secure and privileged boys were the ones who were most committed to Scouting, not the working-class youth Baden-Powell believed needed the Movement's instructions most. One of the more pervasion instances was the reflection of class dynamics in Scout ranks. While boys often brought with them their pre-existing prejudices, structures of rank as well as practical, material costs were determining factors in the Movement's privileged image.

Forming patrols on the ground level and setting curriculum through which activities operated are the most salient points in which these boys understood and appropriated official text. This call-to-action demonstrated their initiative and industriousness. Young leaders reinforced efforts in vocational training, badge earning, record keeping and club maintenance. In doing so, became agents in their own education and development. These boys were the examples of the self-reliance Scouting wished to incorporate in its members. We will see in later chapters how and in what ways boys took the initiative to serve their communities at the local level as well as prepare themselves for combat. Having examined the more practical elements of Scout association, this thesis will look at how boys incorporated and reflected ideas of character training and physical health into their Scouting experience.

## Chapter IV. Self-Discipline of Health and Character

Virtues of body and character, as much as economic and community development, occupied the social designs of Edwardian social thinkers, such as Baden-Powell, and, most importantly the Scouts themselves. Boys might read in their *Boy Scout's Pocket Book of General Information*, distributed by publishers Gale & Polden, that “[a] scout, according to instruction should be as near as possible fit in wind, limb, sight, and hearing; the fat, greedy boy who thinks of nothing but jam tarts has no place in Scouting.”<sup>272</sup> Likewise a Healthy Man badge encouraged fitness and reinforced health education through outdoors activities. Scouts learned that an individual in poor health could place an entire troop in danger: “A Scout who does not know something about taking care of himself would never get on at all; he might just as well stay at home for all the good he will be.”<sup>273</sup> The Scouting Movement’s emphasis on physical conditioning reflected broader Edwardian anxieties over national health and demonstrated how these wider concerns were reflected in the lived experience of these boys.<sup>274</sup> Furthermore, it was the young, enthusiastic Scouts themselves who took the initiative to teach their fellow Scouts the self-discipline it took to develop personal character, Scouting’s code of morality, and public and national health. This chapter will demonstrate that individual Scouts often became moral and spiritual guides to their comrades and younger members in the patrols, which suggests these boys incorporated aspects of Scouting textual encouragement and broader Edwardian efforts of youth character and health development.

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<sup>272</sup> “A B-P Scout,” *Boys Scouts Handbook of General Information*, p. 1. While such pocketbooks were not written by Baden-Powell or produced by Scout HQ, the publishers often had sympathies or direct ties. Gale & Polden, for example had previously published several of Baden-Powell’s pre-Scouting books, including *On Vedette: An Easy Aide-Mémoire* (1883) and *Aids to Scouting for N.C.O.s and Men* (1899). After 1908, much of Baden-Powell’s material was published with *Daily Express* founder, C. Arthur Pearson.

<sup>273</sup> Baden-Powell, “Campfire Yarn no. 18,” *Scouting for Boys*, p. 158.

<sup>274</sup> For more on physical health in youth and national efficiency, see Richard Soloway, “Counting the Degenerates: The Statistics of Race Deterioration in Edwardian England,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, 17.1 (Jan., 1982), pp. 137-164; Michael Paris, *Warrior Nation*; Bourke, *Working-Class Cultures in Britain*; Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Managing the Body: Beauty, Health, and Fitness in Britain, 1880-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); and Hilary Marland, *Health and Girlhood in Britain, 1874-1920* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013).



This chapter will examine how Edwardian initiatives and ideas of health and character were conceptualised and reflected in Scout troops and in the lives of the boys. Young Scout leaders took it upon themselves to disseminate ideas from the likes of Baden-Powell and other social thinkers to the boys under their charge. Along with fostering brotherhood among Scout troops on the local level, health practices also reinforced character building and linked personal wellbeing with national efficiency and security. First, this chapter will examine the ways in which Scouting incorporated activities that were designed to encourage physical fitness into their curriculum and how it linked bodily strength to strength of character and country. Second, this chapter will explore hygiene practices in Scouting and how boys reflected broader themes from the Victorian and Edwardian periods that concerned cleanliness, imperialism, and nationalism. Next, efforts at character building at the local and individual level by the Scouts will be examined. Finally, this chapter will conclude by briefly addressing official and social representations of the ‘Scout character’ and the ways in which the merit badge framework allowed boys to train in activities that had the combined purpose of vocational training and character development of self-discipline.

### **Physical Fitness and National Efficiency**

The activities of the 52<sup>nd</sup> North London Crouch End Troop illustrated the centrality of fitness to Scouting. In January of 1914 the troop performed an assault-at-arms show, a public demonstration that combined martial arts, combat sport, and military defence techniques. This particular North London Troop performed routines in physical drills, weapons demonstrations, and gymnastics, with such highlights as “Bayonet vs. Sabre,” “Blindfold Boxing,” and the “Balaclava Melee.”<sup>275</sup> The balaclava melee event involved groups of

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<sup>275</sup> 52<sup>nd</sup> N. London Troop, “Assault-at-Arms,” Scout Association Archives, 57<sup>th</sup>/52<sup>nd</sup> N. London Troop, no. 203.

individuals in a one versus all competition whereby opponents attempted to knock flags or plumes off each other's heads with sticks. Assault-at-arms performances were popularised during the Victorian period and were adopted by the Scouting Movement as a way to earn funds and establish a community presence. It had the combined effect of encouraging physical fitness and making military service into a game—a facet of Victorian public schools mirrored in Scouting.<sup>276</sup> Later chapters will highlight how such games and activities normalised military imagery and were used by Scouts as pre-military training practices; however at this stage it is important to note the multipurpose function of these activities. Physical fitness and consistent motion were central components in the Scouting experience. The assault-at-arms performance held by these Scouts symbolised their preparedness for national service in their fitness demonstrations.

The same troop's wartime activities provide evidence for how these longstanding exercises took place and developed. A 1916 camp journal reveals that Scouts consciously differentiated between drill and playful activity. Scout G. D. Nokes wrote that “the N.C.O's (*sic*) paraded for their early morning mile sprint, which soon weeded out the faint and weary, and, after breakfast, the morning was spent in signalling and squad drill.”<sup>277</sup> He continued to write that “in the afternoon platoon drill with ‘cables’, ‘hawsers’, or ‘skipping-ropes’, provided more amusement than instruction and ended the official work for the day.”<sup>278</sup> Drill-based activities prepared the boys for possible military service, while the more leisurely games reflected the idea that Scouts maintain momentum, never giving way to idleness. This constant activity, whether drill, play, or often the combination of both, had the double purpose of instilling discipline and condemning laziness. We can see Baden-Powell's position that moral, physical, and national health were linked concepts playing out in Scouts'

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<sup>276</sup> Mangan and McKenzie, “‘Duty unto Death’—the Sacrificial Warrior,” pp. 1080-1081.

<sup>277</sup> G.D. Nokes, “52<sup>nd</sup> London Troop Magazine,” Scout Association Archives, 57<sup>th</sup>/52<sup>nd</sup> N. London Troop, no. 203, p. 6.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*

lived experience. That this boy recalled in explicit language awareness he performed military training exercises demonstrated his active participation with wider social attitudes.

On the other side of London, Marcus Mason of the Clapham Raven Patrol asked his Scouts “what can you do better than Scouting?”<sup>279</sup> He told the boys that “you not only have recreation and exercise, but you begin to think of your mother-country.”<sup>280</sup> The social efforts that linked physical and national health in class-based efforts to fix the working poor were reflected by these boys in the Scouting Movement, making them agents in their own moral and physical development. The Scouting Movement was one aspect of a larger cause to promote civic responsibility, health, and imperial service in youth. Historians such as John Springhall demonstrate that there was a nationwide effort during the late-Victorian and Edwardian periods to extend upper-class values to the working classes.<sup>281</sup> This effort took the form of Christian, moral, and health instruction through religious groups like the Salvation Army, political and education reform acts, with an increased awareness for delinquency and health among youth.<sup>282</sup> These Scout sources demonstrate that boys took an active participation in promoting and contributing to wider social initiatives. While broader social concerns were integral component of Scouting at the high levels, they were also reflected by local Scout leadership.

Scouting activities also encouraged group participation and fitness building games over solo activities, which taught boys to work together as comrades and fostered a sense of brotherhood and unity. In the Northwest of England in 1912 Alexander Fisher and his troop performed a “very realistic Indian play, entitled ‘With Tomahawk and Rifle in the Wild West,’” in which “Indians and cowboys alike fought in a most bloodthirsty manner, the

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<sup>279</sup> Mason, *The Raven*, 5.2 (May 1909), p. 100.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid.

<sup>281</sup> John Springhall, “Building Character in the British Boy: The attempt to extend Christian Manliness to Working-Class Adolescents, 1880-1914,” *Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America: 1800-1940*, ed. by J.A. Mangan and James Walvin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), pp. 52-70.

<sup>282</sup> Springhall, *Youth, Empire, and Society*, pp. 14-18.

Indians yelling, howling, and screaming, the cowboys scouting and firing for dear life.”<sup>283</sup>

While the racial and imperial images here are important to note, what is most crucial at this stage is to understand the linkage between health and other aspects of the Scouting experience. Fitness was promoted through games, adventure, and fun. Furthermore, these Scout games can also be seen as examples of what Haia Shpayer-Makov’s demonstrates as efforts by Victorian and Edwardian employers and government in to link work and leisure for the purpose of creating stronger social and cultural bonds.<sup>284</sup> Many of these boys and leaders treated Scouting as serious work. Shpayer-Makov argues that the Police encouraged its officers to play sport together for the purpose of comradeship and fitness.<sup>285</sup> Likewise, Scouts organised games and activities that had multi-purpose goals of promoting health, character building, and brotherhood, but with patriotic and nationalist elements firmly woven throughout. Again, these examples of local Scout testimonies demonstrate how broader social efforts were enacted and experienced by youth in their association with Scouting.

While the Manchester Scouts played ‘cowboys and Indians,’ a Scout troop in Northumberland performed a ‘tribal’ dance in 1908 that was indicative of what Timothy Parsons observes as Scouting’s “appropriation and reinterpretation of African culture.”<sup>286</sup>

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<sup>283</sup> Fisher, *My Life*, p. 15.

<sup>284</sup> Haia Shpayer-Makov, “Relinking Work and Leisure in Late Victorian and Edwardian England: The Emergence of Police Subculture,” *International Review of Social History*, 47.21 (Aug. 2002), pp. 213-241.

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 223-225.

<sup>286</sup> Parsons, “Een-Gonyama Gonyama,” p. 57.



**Figure 3.1. Northumberland Troop performing ‘Tribal Dance.’**

“Northumberland: The Cradle of Scouting,” *The George*, Pub, Chollerford and Humshugh.

While Parsons argues that Baden-Powell’s military career in southern Africa and his admiration of perceived Zulu traits of discipline and courage helped shape the Movement’s fundamental principles, these games and ‘rituals’ performed at the local level demonstrate how official messages were experienced by the boys themselves. Furthermore, the Northumberland boys appropriated the game straight from Baden-Powell’s texts. The Chief Scout wrote that activities like the Een-gonyama gonyama dance, which he adapted from a Zulu war dance, were particularly useful to attract “wilder spirits who would never join a band of quiet boys.”<sup>287</sup> Again, elements of class and stereotypes of perceived behavioural traits were apparent even in standard Scout games. Culturally appropriated practices of dancing and face painting were common activities in Scouting and created a link between fun

<sup>287</sup> Baden-Powell, “Campfire Yarn no. 4,” *Scouting for Boys*, p. 38.

and fitness. These sources also exemplify previous historiographical arguments made by Parsons and Michael Rosenthal that Scouting was in part an attempt to cure Britain's middle-class laziness and working-class urban deterioration with activities practiced by cultures Baden-Powell believed to be simple and pure.<sup>288</sup> That these individuals developed and encouraged participation in their own ranks demonstrates how keen members amplified Scouting's principles at the local level.

As a final example of physical fitness activities in the Scouting Movement, correspondence in 1916 between Baden-Powell and Rudyard Kipling shows how Scouts' lived experience of such games reflected the founder's wishes. This photograph is of a group of Boy Scouts performing an activity called the "Baloo Dance," named after the bear in Kipling's *The Jungle Book*.



**Figure 3.2. "Baloo Dance."**

"Baloo Dance," Rudyard Kipling, Scout Association Archives, no. 368.

Baden-Powell sent this photograph to the imperial poet in order to get his blessing on naming a junior branch of the Scouts, meant for boys aged eight to ten, the Wolf Cubs in

<sup>288</sup> Parsons, "Een Gonyama Gonyama!", p. 57 and Rosenthal, *Character Factory*, pp. 88-107.

honour of the book.<sup>289</sup> He wrote that he wanted to inspire and impassion the boys through the book's adventure narrative.<sup>290</sup> Scouting went beyond literary imagination, however, as boys took the inspiration from the pages of books and enacted them in a local setting. This is exactly what Scouting set out to instigate and what boys like the Northumberland, Manchester, and North London troops echoed in their activities throughout the country. Elements of fitness were grafted into games that encouraged comradery, health, and discipline. While Scout Headquarters and the boys at the local level encouraged bodily health through hygiene and fitness, morality was built in many of the activities. While the specific function of games and exercises encouraged health and fitness in the manner official Scouting text suggested, boys often replicated and shared the lessons with their own troops.

### **Physical Hygiene**

Writing under the pseudonym "Soap," a boy from Clapham recorded in his troop magazine various troop members' preferences on bathing, while describing a group bath during a campout. Turning for the moment to physical hygiene will allow us to see how health aspects of washing appeared in individual and troop Scout records. He stated that his fellow Scout, Cecil Goddard, expressed that "it has always been my opinion that the evening is a much better time for bathing than the morning."<sup>291</sup> He continued to write that "the whole patrol was in the water before Goddard had buttoned up his costume," while "Fatty smiled pleasantly, and proceeded in the most leisurely manner possible to remove his clothes."<sup>292</sup> Likewise, a Scout by the name of Godfrey Himus recorded his bathing habits in a camp journal. Himus wrote that during a camp "bathing parade," "Frank and I were on bathing

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<sup>289</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, "Letter to Rudyard Kipling, 28 July 1916, Scout Association Archives, "Rudyard Kipling," no. 368.

<sup>290</sup> Baden-Powell, "Letter to Kipling."

<sup>291</sup> Soap, "The Raven's Camp," *The Raven* (Sept 1908), Scout Association Archives, TSA/PER/100/1, p. 18

<sup>292</sup> Ibid.



picket” and “had a ripping bath after the others.”<sup>293</sup> While recording daily activities is common in camp journals, the fact that these seemingly mundane activities are the same ones that feature in Baden-Powell’s own writings reflect an affectation and even aspiration in Scouts’ textual representations of themselves. In the same way boys replicated games and fitness activities in their Scouting life, these two boys reflected upon those aspects of Scouting which appeared in the pages of official publications and texts.

Issues of character and health in the Scouting Movement and Baden-Powell’s texts appeared in bathing and washing practices. The Chief Scout often expressed to his young followers the importance bathing had in keeping wounds clean, keeping one’s body and feet healthy in the field.<sup>294</sup> He wrote that he was:

very glad to see in Hull during a visit there that at the Boys’ Club every boy on coming into the club has had a bath. In the first room he comes into on entering the club he takes off all his clothes and puts them in a rack made for the purpose. Then he goes into a big warm plunge bath, from which he goes into a drying-room, and beyond this is a dressing-room, where he gets a club shirt and pair of shorts to wear for the evening, till it is time to get into his own clothes to go home again.<sup>295</sup>

This interestingly detailed account of these boys’ bathing procedures transcends the simple act of washing to a regimented procedure that encouraged fraternity and discipline. The Hull troop’s practice is also emblematic of Foucault’s suggestion that “time penetrates the body and with it all the meticulous controls of power.”<sup>296</sup> Such regimented activities not only encouraged health and hygiene to the boys, but maintained a standard of behaviour one was required to perform when Scouting. While Baden-Powell stated that “this daily bath is an excellent thing for keeping a fellow healthy and strong,” there is an implied ritualism in his

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<sup>293</sup> Himus, “15 September 1909,” *Boys Scouts Camp Diary*, 1909.

<sup>294</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: Original 1908 Edition*, pp. 186-292. While not a primary concern of this thesis, the scholars have looked at the Scouting Movement through an academic lens of sexuality. See Pryke “Control of Sexuality”, pp. 15-28.

<sup>295</sup> Baden-Powell, “The Order of the Bath,” *Young Knights*, p. 56.

<sup>296</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, translated by Alan Sheridan (London: Penguin, 1977), p. 152



account from what he witnessed at the Hull Scout club.<sup>297</sup> Baden-Powell's military background may illuminate some of the ritual aspects of the bathing regime, but their discipline and maturity exemplified in their bathing suggests that these boys were better Scouts and on their way to becoming better citizens because of the act itself.

This emphasis on the communal aspect of bathing is also depicted in a photo the boys of the Clapham Raven Troop included in their troop magazine. As Baden-Powell ritualized the Hull troop's bathing practices, so too did young Scouts 'Soap' and Himus consider bathing to be a communal, character building experience that contributed to Scout brotherhood. The editors, Mason and Goddard, reflected Baden-Powell's text and imagery, by portraying washing and personal hygiene as a ritualized and necessary aspect of character building and good health. Hygiene and cleanliness was not only specified to the physical body, but also signified character and morality. This chapter will now explore how boys developed character-building techniques into their Scouting experience and how leaders disseminated those lessons to the junior members of their troops.

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<sup>297</sup> Baden-Powell, "The Order of the Bath," *Young Knights*, p. 56.



**Figure 3.3. Raven Patrol Washing Ritual, 1909**

*The Raven*, September 1909, Scout Association Archives, TSA/PER/100/1.

### **Character**

The 1<sup>st</sup> Edwardian Scout Troop, a group of boys from the Midlands, exemplified Baden-Powell's message of temperance in their membership requirements. Their troop rules,

discovered in a minute book from 1909, stated that “boys who smoke, swear or have a bad moral character shall not be eligible” for entrance into the troop.<sup>298</sup> We can see here that these boys adopted Baden-Powell’s high expectations and applied them to their own troop charter. Furthermore, if a boy violated any of the agreed upon rules, he would have to appear before a disciplinary council of senior members of the troop, who would have likely been in their latter teenage years. Their rule stated “the Court of Honour shall consist of officers, sergeants and patrol leaders and shall decide cases brought before it—its decision being final.”<sup>299</sup> This troop created an internal justice system that regulated the morality and actions of its members in emulation of a military tribunal. Such a system not only suggests the boys appropriated broader lessons of temperance, but that they became self-regulating arbiters of character development. Furthermore, the development of such systems at the local level indicates an active youth participation in the Movement’s development. The older, more senior boys acted as paternal figures to the younger boys, extending moral lessons from home and school into Scouting.

Likewise, West Country Scout Edwin C. Bigwood recalled abstaining from alcohol and tobacco due to his devotion to Scouting codes. Not only did he recall that he avoided those vices, but he linked them with personal morality. The same moral code that dissuaded him from indulging in alcohol and tobacco use also prevented him from telling recruitment officers he was at service age. He stated that he was forced to wait a year to join the military at the onset of the First World War because he refused to lie about his age.<sup>300</sup> Bigwood attributed his survival and ability to get through the war to his Scout training in terms of physical conditioning and morality. This combination of morality and national service can be seen in many Scout records from the time. Boys were inundated with lessons of character-

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<sup>298</sup> *The 1<sup>st</sup> Edwardian Troop of Boy Scouts: Log Book and Record*, “Troop Rules,” Library of Birmingham, MS 4036/1.

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>300</sup> Bigwood, *IWM Interview*.

building from the top and eagerly disseminated the ideas to their subordinates and incorporated them into their curriculum.

As with physical fortitude, moral health was at the core of Scout Headquarters' attempt to transform boys into adult citizens. Indeed, character building was the central aim of the Movement and one of the most clearly articulated aspects of Scouting recorded in personal and troop journals. In *Scouting for Boys*, individuals would have read "Keep Clean—Don't Smoke—Don't Drink—Avoid Self-Abuse—Rise Early—Laugh and Grow Fat," expressing Baden-Powell's desire to build character in boys through a variety of physical and moral measures.<sup>301</sup> Baden-Powell linked physical health with morality, arguing for example that if a boy avoided smoking tobacco, he maintained good health, earned respect from his peers, and warranted a position of leadership.<sup>302</sup> The Chief Scout was also a supporter of the Anti-Cigarette League, an organisation committed to the prevention of tobacco use among youth, and even claimed to have had 57,000 boys pledge smoking abstinence.<sup>303</sup> Likewise, as Matthew Hilton observes, Baden-Powell made sensationalist claims that linked national defence with smoking and claimed that tobacco use inhibited marksmanship.<sup>304</sup> Yet, while Hilton argues that such statements contributed to the general public's apathy towards youth smoking, examples from the 1<sup>st</sup> Edwardian Troop and Scout Bigwood highlight the fact that some boys involved in the Movement did indeed incorporate anti-smoking efforts into their Scouting experience. As fears of physical deterioration compelled Scouting to promote fitness, so too did boys attempt to stamp out what they agreed were tendencies of laziness, vice, and vulgarity.

Baden-Powell outlined practically how to build character in Scouts in *Scouting for Boys* and disseminated his moral framework through speeches and subsequent publications.

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<sup>301</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: Original 1908 Edition*, p. 195.

<sup>302</sup> Ibid, pp. 197-198.

<sup>303</sup> Matthew Hilton, "'Tabs', 'Fags', and the 'Boy Labour Problem' in Late Victorian and Edwardian Britain," *Journal of Social History*, 28.3 (Spring, 1995) p. 597.

<sup>304</sup> Ibid.

His message was also promoted through other individuals, such as authors, publishers, and politicians, sympathetic to Scouting. The ideas central to Baden-Powell's brand of education have already been explored in the introduction chapter, yet it will be useful at this stage to recall pertinent themes related to character and health. Baden-Powell specifically targeted vulgar language, apathy, laziness, gambling, masturbation, smoking, and drinking as evils that blocked boys' path towards proper manhood: that is a manhood which contributed to society and the nation through the manner in which Baden-Powell deemed respectable.

Baden-Powell wrote that "there is also prevalent a great amount of illness resulting from self-abuse and venereal disease, as well as from drink...training of Boy Scouts would be therefore incomplete if it did not endeavour to help in remedying these evils."<sup>305</sup> Sam Pryke notes that it was not only Baden-Powell who was concerned with the immorality of masturbation, but other high ranking members of Scouting too. Between the years 1910-1912 masturbation was a large topic of conversation in the *Headquarter Gazette* that occupied the minds of scoutmasters.<sup>306</sup> Likewise, Elleke Boehmer argues that Baden-Powell's portrayal of the asexual Scout "as one of the beneficial products of colonial frontier-life" mirrored other literary depictions of boys who abstained from 'vice' while they served the nation and empire found in such *Boys' Own* publications.<sup>307</sup> While young readers would have been exposed to this conversation and imagined vision of boyhood, it is difficult to gauge the response without direct evidence or reference in their written testimony. All of these issues as well were examples of class-targeted problems Baden-Powell believed contributed to the poor moral and physical health of British boys. What these sources do suggest, however, is that boys did in fact engage in sexual and romantic ideas, despite Baden-Powell's instruction.

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<sup>305</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: Original 1908 Edition*, p. 185.

<sup>306</sup> Pryke, "Control of Sexuality," pp. 15-28.

<sup>307</sup> Elleke Boehmer, "At Once A-sexual and Anal: Baden-Powell and the Boy Scouts," *Children and Sexuality: From the Greeks to the Great War*, ed. by George Rousseau (New York: Palgrave and MacMillan, 2007), pp. 299-300.

The young leaders of the 5<sup>th</sup> Clapham Raven patrol encouraged character building principles by providing their members with lessons in each issue of the troop magazine. The magazine itself was modelled after youth publications like *Chums* and *Boys' Own Paper*, which as Patrick Dunae observes, were publications designed for the specific purpose of turning boys' attention away from frivolous entertainment and providing their reading experience with moral and patriotic substance.<sup>308</sup> The troop magazine, entitled *The Raven*, after the troop symbol, contained entertaining material such as adventure stories, general information on nature, troop details and events, official rules for Scouting, and instruction from the local troop leaders. Every Scout was expected to contribute to the monthly magazine, however, as is evident from the complaints recorded in the pages, that did not always happen. In the September 1908 edition a young reader would have opened the magazine to find a recap of the previous month's events and a welcoming message from the editor, in this case the troop treasurer, W. Dane. The troop bugler and senior member then took over from his fellow officer and explained to his Scouts why he personally joined the Movement. Health and character emerged immediately on the pages, as the approximately fifteen-year-old troop leader Cecil Goddard explained that he joined "because it [Scouting] affords healthy exercise to the physical as well as the mental faculties."<sup>309</sup> He set the tone that while both Scouting and the magazine were fun, they were also serious work which required dedication and a robust mind, body, and spirit, exemplifying Baden-Powell's brand of work ethic.

Developing his subordinate officer's sentiments, the troop's approximately sixteen-year-old leader echoed Goddard's promotion of health by preaching against sloth and excess. Patrol Leader Marcus Mason wrote a poem (a skill Baden-Powell encouraged), which outlined to his boys the importance of hard work and a clean, physical appearance:

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<sup>308</sup> Dunae, "Boys' Literature and the Idea of Empire," p. 105-121.

<sup>309</sup> Mason, *The Raven* (September 1908), p. 1.

If you would woo the Dame success,  
 No fear of work you must possess;  
 Be not inclined to laziness,  
 Not pleasure seeking to excess.  
 And here are facts I would impress:  
 Politeness is a gem; your dress  
 Should never show untidiness;  
 Be honest; underhandedness  
 No efforts to success will bless.  
 “Work Hard”; that is the tip I guess—  
 And thus you will success.

Entitled “Success,” this poem mirrored *Scouting for Boys*’ concept that in order for a boy to be a successful citizen and man, he must work hard, maintain purity in mind and body, and practice moderation. This attempt by Mason to impart his troop with these lessons exemplified Baden-Powell’s call for ‘knights’ to train their loyal ‘squires’ in chivalry. As Baden-Powell wrote that “the knights of old were the Patrol Leaders,” while “the men-at-arms were the scouts,” ready to follow their leader’s command and learn from the implied moral superiority of those in an elevated social station.<sup>310</sup> As a knight was pure in spirit and deed, so too were Scouts encouraged to shun temptation, pay good deeds forward, and stay clean. That Patrol Leader Mason accepted Baden-Powell’s mantle of responsibility demonstrates an active reader reception at the troop level.

Mason, a boy of around sixteen or seventeen years of age, supplemented his poetry with short, single sentence lessons for his troop members to follow.<sup>311</sup> He encouraged the Scouts to “do the hard things first,” and mused that “somehow a lazy man is never too lazy to bother a busy one.”<sup>312</sup> Mason not only promoted what he believed to be good qualities, but castigated Scouts who demonstrated negative ones. The magazine allowed for Scouts to contribute light-hearted and humorous stories, yet the leaders often began and ended the issues with messages taken from Scout Headquarters or appropriated from Baden-Powell’s

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<sup>310</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: Original 1908 Edition*, p. 213.

<sup>311</sup> Marcus Brian Mason: The 1911 English Census,” <[www.ancestrylibrary.com](http://www.ancestrylibrary.com)>.

<sup>312</sup> Mason, *The Raven* (Sept 1909), p. 3.

writings. A hierarchy of authority and responsibility is evident even in the magazine structure: leaders dealt with the serious issues, while lower ranked scouts contributed to more playful pieces until they earned the respect of the troop. Troop Leader Mason took on the responsibility of not only organising troop activities, but encouraged moral health in the younger boys.

Mason's role as patrol patriarch also involved instructing his boys on matters of love and courting. He told his patrol that "every minister has his favourite hymn, & every other sort of man has his favourite her."<sup>313</sup> Likewise, he wrote to his Scouts that "A girl would much rather be told how pretty she was, than how much brain power she has, but it is just as well to tell her both, which reinforces Sarah Mills's argument that masculine structures in the early days of Scouting excluded girls from participation on a much deeper level than pure organisational structure."<sup>314</sup> The patrol leader's sentiment reflected, aside from glaring sexism, a level of paternalism for the boys in his patrol. These excerpts also highlight a slight break with the official lines of sexual temperance given Mason's suggestion that his Scouts thought about girls in the romantic or even sexual sense. This young leader took an interest in the personal wellbeing of the boys under his charge, not only in the physical sense, but in character development and general life.

The most important insight from Mason's lessons to his fellow Scouts, however, was when he wrote that "all boys imagine that they will do just as they like after they are twenty-one; but some of them get married."<sup>315</sup> This line indicates Mason set a limit of sorts on his childhood, in this instance, twenty one years old. As Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress's observed that "children are active participants in their own cultural formation" and that the process of "assimilation into a culture...covers over a multiplicity of complex processes of reaction, resistance, subversion, acquiescence, and acceptance," we can see that Scouts

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<sup>313</sup> Ibid, p. 4.

<sup>314</sup> Ibid and Mills, "Scouting for Girls?," p. 538.

<sup>315</sup> Mason, *The Raven* (Sept 1908), p. 4.



participated in their own identity construction by appropriating Baden-Powell's text and mission ideology.<sup>316</sup> While the steps Hodge and Kress identified are not mutually exclusive, nor occur congruently, they provide a useful framework for identifying processes of organisational or social integration. Applying Hodge and Kress's reading to this examination shows that Scouts like Mason took Baden-Powell's text as inspiration, yet redrafted it to fit their own lives and understanding of the world around them. Given that Mason himself was many years shy of marriage age at this time suggests he appropriated the concepts from an outside source and attempted to display a particular level of maturity. Mason's affected adulthood image was a reflection of Scouting's mission of citizen training and attempt to turn British boys into proper men.

Broader social and imperial reflections of Victorian and Edwardian mentalities towards the family are present in Scout diaries, often in terms rooted in gender and citizenship. I argue that many boys forwent their childhood, in a sense, and actively participated in the adult world, not as children, but as equal participants in community endeavours. This is not to suggest these boys wholly abandoned their childlike tendencies, nor can I comment on their behaviour or attitudes at home. For many boys, however, Scouting became their education on citizenship, the mechanism through which they grappled with broader national and social issues, and their pathway into adulthood. Baden-Powell's texts and Scouting itself was designed to turn boys into men, yet it was nevertheless one of many voices and initiatives boys would have been subjected to during the Edwardian period that focused on child development.

What is crucial in Mason's writing, is that we can see again an appropriation of adult themes and ideas. It is impossible to know the relationship or romantic lives of these boys for sure, however, given that these boys were in their mid-teenage years it is likely Mason's

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<sup>316</sup> Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress, *Social Semiotics*, (Padstow, Cornwall: Polity Press, 1988), p. 240.

understanding of marriage was appropriated from outside influences, rather than personal experience. Furthermore, such statements are also reflective of normative gender roles of Edwardian Britain in that men were taught to be simultaneously protectors over women, yet beholden to their sensitivities of the family.<sup>317</sup> Mason's ideas towards marriage are emblematic of the sentiment found in Hugh Oakeley Arnold-Forster's *The Citizen Reader* (1904), a text used in schools, in which the author wrote "at home it is sometimes your duty to deny yourself some amusement or advantage for the sake of your mother or sisters; or again, as you may possibly have to suffer some pain or inconvenience for their good."<sup>318</sup> This attitude towards responsibility in the family sphere, which Stephen Heathorn observes were used as metaphors for broader "social and gender ideologies" to instil schoolchildren with a sense of nationalism and citizenship, were present in wider social discourse and in this Scout's writing.<sup>319</sup> Scouting's brand of 'chivalry' as well, which taught boys that "when walking with a lady or a child, a scout should always have her on his left side, so that his right is free to protect her," reinforced gender roles of males as the protectors and women as weak.<sup>320</sup> Baden-Powell charged Scouts with protecting women, children, and elderly, thus promoting them to roles shared by adult men. While he was presumably too young to experience marriage and familial responsibility himself, this young Scout reflected a cultural and Scouting attitude of paternalism and took it upon himself to disseminate his perceptions to the younger boys under his charge. These specific attitudes of paternalism, as we also see with health and character development, contributed to an overall framework of national strength.

On the other side of the country, in the Northwest of England, the enthusiastic Scout leader Alexander Fisher viewed himself as a role model for the Scouts under his care. He

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<sup>317</sup> See Stephen Heathorn, *For Home, Country, and Race: Constructing Gender, Class, and Englishness in the Elementary School, 1800-1914* (London: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

<sup>318</sup> Hugh Oakeley Arnold-Forster, *The Citizen Reader* (London: Cassell & Company, 1904), p. 18.

<sup>319</sup> Heathorn, *Home, Country, and Race*, p. 143.

<sup>320</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, p. 219.

claimed that he neglected spending time at home not from choice, but because he, as a Scout leader, had a responsibility to “keep the lads together and keep them well occupied each evening instead of them having to rove the streets.”<sup>321</sup> Fisher expressed this thought in the manner of a martyr and enacted the Chief Scout’s ideas concerning the burden of responsibility. Fisher carried this moral obligation throughout his tenure as Scout leader and into his military career. He confessed he was given the nickname Parson due to his pious tendency to scold his comrades for swearing and smoking, “habits” he lamented “which unfortunately run rife with a number of fellows” in the army.<sup>322</sup> As an economically privileged boy devoted to instructing those around him on good character, Fisher believed his upbringing and divinely inspired qualities gave him the responsibility to take up leadership roles in the Movement.<sup>323</sup>

“Parson’s” paternalistic attitude over his Scouts reflected religious aspects of the Movement and social development as well. Briefly examining the religious aspects of Scouting and how it merged with character development in the Movement highlights the ways in which character development operated at the local level.<sup>324</sup> Religion is a minor presence in the boys’ diaries and troop journals, where it appeared strongest, however, suggests two important points: how character development was enacted in local troops and the somewhat autonomous ways in which individuals operated their activities. The independence of these early troops and the grassroots nature of the movement, as well as

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<sup>321</sup> Fisher, *My Life*, p. 4.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid, p. 8.

<sup>323</sup> John Henry Fisher: The 1911 English Census,” <[www.ancestrylibrary.com](http://www.ancestrylibrary.com)>.

<sup>324</sup> For literature on Scouting’s relationship with religion, both in the early days and throughout the twentieth century, see Warren, “Scout Movement and Citizen Training,” pp. 381-391; Parsons, *Race, Resistance, and the Boy Scout Movement*, pp.37-61; Sarah Mills, “Youth Citizenship and Religious Difference: Muslim Scouting in the United Kingdom,” *Scouting Frontiers: Youth and the Scout Movement’s First Century*, ed. by Nelson R. Block and Tammy Proctor (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2009), pp. 190-206; and Jay Mechling, “God and ‘Whatever’ in the Boy Scouts of America,” *Scouting Frontiers: Youth and the Scout Movement’s First Century*, ed. by Nelson R. Block and Tammy Proctor (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2009), pp. 175-189.

issues health and morality, are exemplified in the following Scout testimonies within a religious context.

London Scout leader Maurice Gamon published a text entitled *The Spirit of Scouting* in 1914 in which he argued that Sunday Schools should adopt lessons from the Movement to better retain boys' interests.<sup>325</sup> He wrote that the "master key" that opened boys' imagination and kept their interest in Scouting was to appeal to them through "a boy's own point of view."<sup>326</sup> Gamon used Baden-Powell's techniques to capture boys' attention in his own troop and linked them with religious instruction. Christian teaching, therefore, was a central aspect in his troop's Scouting experience. Gamon taught his Scouts that a Scoutmaster or patrol leader was similar to Jesus Christ, while his Scouts were the disciples. Gamon stated that Christ "was a handy-man skilled in the use of carpenter's tools," who "was loyal to God and to his parents, and "did His daily good turns."<sup>327</sup> Gamon also noted that when one of his Scouts injured his knee to the point he required stitches while camping, they sat around the campfire that night talking "of Jesus and the pain *He* bore."<sup>328</sup> While this is an extreme example of a Troop leader comparing the works and minor injuries of his Scouts to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, it does highlight the tone under which some Scouts operated. In linking his Scouting experience to his religious faith, Gamon positioned the Movement as a force that had the potential to save boys from corruption.

Scout Gamon took this idea of Scouting and salvation a step further and believed that Scouting was the best and most effective way in which society could "save the boys" in Edwardian Britain.<sup>329</sup> He argued that Scouting was "outstripping every similar organisation in numbers and in the flood of boyish enthusiasm."<sup>330</sup> Only Scouting, Gamon maintained,

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<sup>325</sup> Gamon, *The Spirit of Scouting*.

<sup>326</sup> Ibid, pp. 9-10.

<sup>327</sup> Ibid, p. 52.

<sup>328</sup> Ibid, p. 53.

<sup>329</sup> Ibid. 7.

<sup>330</sup> Ibid, p. 6.

had the ability to “capture the budding hooligan” and transform them into a “‘holy gang’ of clean, honest, open-hearted boys,” because no other movement before was able to keep the “bad boy’s” attention long enough to make a difference.<sup>331</sup> Gamon’s sentiment was the embodiment of a ‘yarn’ told in *Scouting for Boys*, in which Baden-Powell cited that a Scoutmaster named Mr. Tomlin, known as “the hooligan tamer,” who “catches and gets his lads in hand entirely by the force of energetic signing and action in chorus.”<sup>332</sup> Gamon, like Scout leaders at the top, believed Scouting could transform and ‘heal’ Britain’s damaged youth. The heavy use of class-based and hygienic language in Gamon’s account was emulative of higher-ranking Scouts, as the final chapter demonstrated. Furthermore, as previously argued, Scouting made little inroads into working-class or poor neighbourhoods during or before the war, which suggests that Gamon’s hopes may have been more aspirational than experience-based. What is important here, however, is that Gamon associated Christian teachings experienced by his troop with class and character-building. For Gamon, Scouting was the mechanism through which he could instil Christian teachings in youth and provide them with lessons he believed would build a morally strong and dutiful citizen. His dual role of missionary and troop leader provides us with another example of an individual at the local level using the Movement in the way he saw fit, to further his own goals.

Like Gamon, Manchester Scout Fisher had strong Christian convictions and tied them into his teachings. He was several years younger than Gamon, only in his late teenage years as the war loomed, yet no less devoted to building character in the boys under his charge and performing ‘good works’ for his community and country. However, not only did he follow Christ’s teachings when leading his troop, he also described Scouting itself as a divinely inspired movement. He wrote of the Movement that “if scouting has been all this benefit to

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<sup>331</sup> Ibid.

<sup>332</sup> Baden-Powell, “Campfire Yarn no. 4,” *Scouting for Boys*, p. 38.

me, it has also been the Salvation of thousands of other fellows” and that “I have blessed ‘B.P.’ scores of times for inaugurating the Movement.”<sup>333</sup> Again, we can see the concept of salvation and saving boys from sin appearing in a Scout’s testimony of his understanding of the Movement. The sin, however, was not articulated in terms of an eternal punishment in Hell, but in national decline and personal deterioration. Just as Fisher attempted to maintain his boys’ attention with activities to keep them off the street, as stated earlier, he understood the combination of Scouting and Christianity as a means to heal and save the nation. Personal health and national redemption were linked in Fisher’s understanding of social issues and he used the Scouting Movement to help him serve to that end.

Fisher also held in worshipful reverence Baden-Powell, as the founder of the Movement. The Manchester Scout leader wrote that “I have no hesitation in saying that ‘B.P.’ has done more for the advancement of the world than any other person, past or present, save of course, our blessed Saviour Himself.”<sup>334</sup> While it is important to take performative aspects of these boys’ writings into account when analysing the texts, Fisher’s testimony about the Movement and the person he regarded as “something as higher then (*sic*) mere man” does provide us with an insight into how he understood the Movement’s position in society and his own role in the Movement.<sup>335</sup> Furthermore, Fisher’s veneration of Scouting is reflective of his fellow Scout Gamon’s belief that “A boy’s hero may be Dick Turpin or Sexton Blake, Robin Hood or Sir Walter Raleigh, Livingston or Captain Scott,” but greatest of all Scout heroes, in the estimation of the boy, is the Chief Scout himself.”<sup>336</sup> Both Fisher and Gamon believed that Baden-Powell was genuine in his convictions and performed his deeds with righteousness, just as a holy figure would. Each boy emulated Christ and the idea

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<sup>333</sup> Fisher, *My Life*, p. 25.

<sup>334</sup> Ibid.

<sup>335</sup> Fisher, *My Life*, p. 25.

<sup>336</sup> Gamon, *Spirit of Scouting*, pp. 13-14.

of Scouting as they understood it. This was the image Fisher and Gamon attempted to live up to, how they ran their troops, and how experienced the Movement in their own lives.

Religion's appearance in the Movement also highlights the independent and autonomous nature of the Movement in the early days. While Baden-Powell believed personal faith was a benefit to a Scout and individual, and initially encouraged boys to form troops within their existing Sunday School structures, he maintained its secularism and multi-faith inclusiveness.<sup>337</sup> He also linked religion to other Scouting principles of fun and civic responsibility, writing "religion can and ought to be taught to the boy, but not in a milk-and-water way, or in a mysterious and lugubrious manner."<sup>338</sup> It was important that boys be taught religion's "heroic side" and learn how it could create a "proper man."<sup>339</sup> Likewise, in situating this section on religion between commentary on 'thrift' and 'temperance' in *Scouting for Boys*, Baden-Powell promoted religion and faith as one of many tools boys should use to turn themselves into good citizens. The strong presence of religion in these boys' testimonies, therefore, reflects how ideas were encouraged by official text, yet amplified by enthusiastic individuals at the local levels.

Other youth initiatives required religious instruction as part of their membership requirements. An education initiative in Birmingham supported by youth activist Elizabeth Cadbury, for example, required boys under their care in 1910 to join the Boys' Brigade, due to their belief that "weekly Bible Class" and "drill and discipline do much to teach the boy those habits of obedience, self-respect, and cleanliness which are so necessary."<sup>340</sup> The Scouting Movement allowed boys to create religious instruction, or as this thesis will later demonstrate, military training, in their own patrols and troops. This thesis demonstrates that

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<sup>337</sup> Mills, "Religious Difference," p. 192.

<sup>338</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: Original 1908 Edition*, p. 243.

<sup>339</sup> Ibid.

<sup>340</sup> "Youth Clubs," "Barrow Cadbury Trust: The Cadbury Family, A Tradition of Philanthropy," Birmingham, Central Library, MS466/152/14.

just as individuals brought with them their ideologies concerning class and nationalism, religious belief was another example of how people at the local level shaped the Movement.

Baden-Powell's rhetoric warned that smoking and drinking dulls one's senses, making them vulnerable in the field, and stated that "much of the poverty and distress in the world is brought about by men getting into the habit of wasting their money and time on drink," and that "a great deal of crime, and also of illness, and even madness, is due to the habit of drinking too much."<sup>341</sup> He wrote that "bad language and swearing are used, like smoking, by boys who want to try to show off how manly they are, but it only makes them look like fools," while too often giving into the "temptation of self-abuse" "tends to lower both health and spirits."<sup>342</sup> Each of these perceived corruptions were linked both physically and morally, combining bodily and spiritual purity into one doctrine. The boys who took up leadership positions in Scouting were not only charged with teaching their troop civic responsibility, but to also act as stewards for their peers' health and moral wellbeing.

While Baden-Powell and Scouts such as Fisher censored harmful activities, the boys did not always follow the rules, leaving the patrol and troop leaders responsible for taking disciplinary action. A 1909 camp journal shows Scouts being chastised by their patrol leader and using vulgar language. While lying in their hammocks, after lights out, one boy loudly complained that his hammock is tearing. Although it was after 'lights out,' the boys laughed in their mischief. The commotion was loud enough that their patrol leader, a boy named A. W. Horne, came into the tent and threatened the Scouts with early reveille. After the leader left the bunk, another boy scolded his peer for making a fuss, stating "you are an ass (Bill)! I was scratching my hammock all the time."<sup>343</sup> Likewise, Troop Leader Mason, from the 5<sup>th</sup> Clapham, also spent much effort in the troop magazine criticising his Scouts, writing that "attendance for April was rather poor" and that "not sufficient keenness has been shown

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<sup>341</sup> Baden-Powell, "Campfire Yarn no. 18," *Scouting for Boys*, p. 188.

<sup>342</sup> Ibid, p. 161.

<sup>343</sup> Himus, "21/8/1909," *Boy Scouts Camp Diary, 1909*.



towards the magazine and scouting in general.”<sup>344</sup> Examples such as these show that Scouts did not always enact Baden-Powell’s teachings completely and that doctrine and the lived experience of Scouting did sometimes differ. Boys may not have always obeyed the rules against swearing, laziness, and other vices, but what is important is that Scouting’s hierarchical foundation created a self-regulating system by which boys would support each other in their efforts to maintain moral purity. It was not only Baden-Powell who preached good character, but the enthusiastic leadership at the bottom. Boys like Mason and Horne enacted Baden-Powell’s brand of discipline at the local level, spreading and reinforcing his ideals of character building.

What these examples show us is that throughout England boys appropriated and adapted Baden-Powell’s ideas on health into their own day-to-day Scout experience: from replications of Zulu dances in Northumberland, to the Clapham troop modelling their troop magazine on national publications designed to instruct good character in youth, to a boy from Manchester pestering his peers about vulgar language and smoking. Scouting addressed health within a class framework from two positions: working-class vice and middle-class sloth. In keeping with his Victorian roots, Baden-Powell also stressed to his young readers the importance of moderation. Linking bodily health with national strength, he warned that the Romans “were in the end driven out of their Empire, because they allowed themselves to become weak in mind and in body by too much laziness in theatre-going and continual hot baths.”<sup>345</sup> While one can enjoy a bath or game, it was the emphasis on health, practicality, and brotherly bonding was the primary focus. Moderation and temperance appear as concerns throughout Scout journals. These examples also allow us to make further ‘class’ comments can be made on the relationship between the ‘unclean’ lower classes and ‘pampered’ middle classes. We can see in the suburban London troops presented above a

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<sup>344</sup> Mason, “The Month’s Review,” *The Raven*, 5.1 (1909), Scout Association Archives, TSA/PER/100/1.

<sup>345</sup> Baden-Powell, “An Ancient Inscription,” *Young Knights*.

keenness to promote physical fitness and firm work ethic, while Fisher in the north west was concerned largely with keeping boys from smoking, swearing, and causing trouble around the community in the evenings. Each of these examples demonstrate boys at the local level engaging with wider social efforts to promote physical and moral health among youth and how they actively contributed to the process.

We cannot divorce fears of national decline from the issue of class. Arnold White's infamous report that stated one-third of British men fighting in the South African War from industrial cities were physically unfit for service encouraged a loud response from government, social, and military institutions to create efforts to combat the problem.<sup>346</sup> Victorian concerns about health was covered in the second chapter, however, tied in with pollution and disease were also ideas of moral and racial degeneration brought upon not only by smog, but also through political apathy, frivolity, and decadence. Scouting was meant to attack working-class vulgarity and middle-class decadence through physical fitness, moral character building, and patriotism. The Scouting project, reflected in the experience of those within the Movement, linked nationhood, character, and health together, creating a system through which each segment supported and reinforced one another.

### **Representations of Health, Good Behaviour, and Heroism**

Having addressed the ways in which boys incorporated elements of character and health-building in their Scouting experience, this section will examine how Scouts' activities were represented by contemporary literary figures, Boy Scout Headquarters, and social activists. Doing so will allow us to draw parallels between the ways in which boys represented themselves in their records and how adult figures imagined Scouts' function in society.

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<sup>346</sup> Bourke, *Working-Class Cultures in Britain*, p. 172.

While Baden-Powell and other top-ranking Scout leaders believed Scouting would benefit boys and the nation alike, they were not alone in seeing Scouting's positive health benefits to society. As young leaders encouraged character and health in their troops, adult supporters of the Movement promoted their works and depicted Scouting as a respectable and healthy activity to the nation at large.

Author Tom R. Chatfield published a piece in a Manchester-based manuscript magazine called *Odds & Ends* concerning the character of Boy Scouts. He recalled that while he was in the Lake District he saw a group of boys on a school trip. He wrote that when "groups of two or three boys drop into the village wearing shorts, shirts or sweaters, and heavily nailed boots," "your involuntary thought is 'what a bunch of ragamuffins.'"<sup>347</sup> However, after seeing the boys' clothes, he asked "but what's this?"<sup>348</sup> The fact that "some of them are wearing a cap" indicated they were part of the Manchester Summer School.<sup>349</sup> Chatfield realised that a group of about fifty grammar school boys were camped outside of the Lake District village of Grasmere. His initial opinion towards the boys turned from one of annoyance to friendly curiosity once he realised they were grammar-school students. Likewise, the outdoor activities in which these boys participated during the camping trip is also indicative of Northern grammar schools' efforts to appropriate the games ethos and athletic sportsmanship long championed by the public schools.<sup>350</sup> This grammar school camping trip, just like many Scouting activities that were financially exclusionary to boys from poorer backgrounds, were, as J.A. Mangan notes as "expensive symbols of emulations, distancing, ambition, and success."<sup>351</sup> As demonstrated earlier in this chapter, however,

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<sup>347</sup> Tom R. Chatfield, "A Boy Scouts' Trek in Lakeland," *Odds & Ends: Volume IX*, ed. by B.A. Redfern (Manchester: S. Parrlis Literary and Educational Society, 1914), Manchester Central Library, GB127.M38/4/2/60.

<sup>348</sup> Ibid, p. 176.

<sup>349</sup> Ibid.

<sup>350</sup> J. A., Mangan, "Grammar Schools and the Games Ethic in Victorian and Edwardian Eras," *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 15.4 (1983), p. 326.

<sup>351</sup> Ibid, p. 313.

Scouting allowed boys to contribute to the process directly and positioned them as students and teachers.

Among these grammar school boys, whom Chatfield had already elevated in social and moral standing after realising they were not of the working class, the Boy Scouts stood out in work ethic and moral character. Chatfield recalled that at “about eight oclock (*sic*) these boys gather together in large parties and if you were to follow them, you would see that they went along the mile or so of road between them and their camp, cracking jokes and singing or, at least, making a joyful noise.”<sup>352</sup> The Scouts among them, however, followed “about a hundred yards behind the main party” and “were engaged in serious talk and planning a ‘trek’ for the next two days, for which they intend[ed] to ask permission that night.”<sup>353</sup> Not only did the author praise these boys for working on the more serious issues before engaging the rest of the group in song, he placed them apart from the other boys in their peer group, elevating them and their characters to a more mature status. To Chatfield, Boys Scouts were better suited for adulthood and citizen responsibilities than other boys due to their dedication to personal initiative and civic duty. The Scouts were not only simply placed at the top of the youth hierarchy, but rather transcended perceived normative youth behaviour in general. Scouting intended to teach boys proper citizenship, while Chatfield and Baden-Powell represented them as young adults in training. Chatfield’s observation provides us an insight into how Scouting was depicted in Edwardian press and literature, while the personal testimony from the boys demonstrate that young leaders themselves did indeed develop character and health-building practices into the curriculum.

Baden-Powell’s statements on suicide in the original edition of *Scouting for Boys* provide an important example of the links between Scout health, education, and citizen training. This chapter has addressed the relationship boys and local troops had with health

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<sup>352</sup> Chatfield, “Scouts’ Trek, p. 176.

<sup>353</sup> Ibid.

and hygiene, yet the manner in which Scouting addressed and taught health practices is likewise crucial for analysing character development and the model under which Scouts like Fisher and Gamon hoped to emulate. Scouting not only provided boys with lessons that could benefit them and others in a real-life emergency situation, Baden-Powell and Scout authority also bestowed upon them an implied authority. Baden-Powell told his young readers that “you may have opportunities of saving people who are thinking of killing themselves” and that when “a man has gone so far as to attempt suicide, a scout should know what to do with him.”<sup>354</sup> By the Edwardian period, mental illness was seen by the medical establishment as a great factor in suicide rates, while social thinkers, including Baden-Powell, believed that social problems of “poverty, illiteracy, petty crime, [and] habitual drunkenness” were interconnected factors.<sup>355</sup> Baden-Powell, therefore, felt Scouting could cure this social ailment, again positioning Scouting as a necessity for broader social needs and the overall health of the nation. In Baden-Powell’s scheme, youth would be direct participants in remedying the problems he believed faced Britain at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Using explicit imagery, he continued: “in the case of a man cutting his throat, the great point is to stop the bleeding from the artery,” which “runs from where the collarbone and breast-bone join, up to the corner of the jaw, and the way to stop bleeding is to press hard with the thumb on the side of the wound nearest the heart.”<sup>356</sup> The instruction went on in a similar fashion giving advice about how to save a person attempting self-poisoning, drowning, or hanging. Calling peoples’ squeamishness towards the sight of blood “nonsense”, Baden-Powell wrote that “at Reading, not long ago, two men were severely reprimanded by the coroner for being afraid to go and cut down a man who had hanged himself—they only ran and fetched someone else, and so he was killed.”<sup>357</sup> Finally, the

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<sup>354</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: 1908 Edition*, pp. 268-269.

<sup>355</sup> Olive Anderson, *Suicide in Victorian and Edwardian England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pp. 376-417.

<sup>356</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: 1908 Edition*, p. 269.

<sup>357</sup> Ibid.

author asked his readers directly, “what would you have done had you been one of the men?”<sup>358</sup> By making the boys responsible for not only the wellbeing and health of their fellow Scouts, but of the population at large, Baden-Powell placed Scouts fully in the broader adult world and encouraged them to act as national protectors. The Movement allowed boys to transcend their childhood to engage with their communities by becoming responsible for the health and character of their fellow citizen. The purpose of Scouting was not to create a group of boys who worked for their nation within the boundaries of their youth, but to create men who were committed to civic duty the same as an adult.

Scouting badges and merit awards were standardised ways of helping boys achieve this responsibility and a way for them to show the community their proficiency in skilled work. Looking back at Scout A. E. Hughes, troop leader of the 5<sup>th</sup> Coventry, we can see he recorded the awards and merit badges he earned during his Scouting days during the final years of the First World War. The successful completion of the ‘Missioner Test,’ ‘Rescuer Test,’ and the ‘Public Health Man Test’ each demonstrated aspects of the Movement that linked health and character to both the individual and broader society.<sup>359</sup> Likewise, the Miner Badge allowed boys to earn vocational training and represented Scouting’s mission to contribute to local community endeavours. The badge also served as an example where vocational training and encouragement of civic service linked with health, both in terms of personal safety and communal stewardship. A report from a 1913 Public Health Meeting in Manchester highlights ways in which Scouting reflected broader social efforts. The report stated that “boys and girls are being spoilt physically, mentally, and morally by their too early emergence into the ranks of the employed, by lack of guidance in the choice of occupations suited to their capacity, by inadequate opportunities of skilled training, and by insufficient

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<sup>358</sup> Ibid, p. 270.

<sup>359</sup> *Brown’s Boy Scout Diary*, A. E. Hughes.

safeguarding and husbanding of their physical powers and resources.”<sup>360</sup> This report shows concerns Edwardian social thinkers had about youth health and fitness, much of which was reflected in the Scouts’ diaries and badge system, and their thinking about how to address the problems. Linking personal health and character development with vocational training and national efficiency was a key aspect of the Scouting Movement.

In 1914 the minimum requirements for the award ‘Miner Badge’ were “general knowledge of one particular branch of the mining industry, such as coal, iron or other mineral, with the special dangers involved, and safeguards against them, and must have worked below the surface for not less than six months.”<sup>361</sup> While no database exists that shows who achieved this award, Scout Headquarters did provide lessons to its young readers on the importance mining knowledge had on communities. Citing the Cadeby Colliery disaster of 1912, in which eighty-eight men lost their lives in a South Yorkshire mining explosion, Headquarters told readers that a Scoutmaster Prince was one of the first rescuers on the scene, after the blast.<sup>362</sup> Headquarters also claimed that one of Prince’s Scouts, a boy named Smith, was killed along with his Scoutmaster during the rescue efforts.<sup>363</sup> The lesson of this story, was that “Scouting has taken a strong hold in many colliery districts, and if it can produce men and boys prepared to act in every emergency as these two heroic examples, it has indeed a place in the colliery as everywhere else.”<sup>364</sup> Scouting’s morals and ideals were represented in the brave deeds of these two individuals and were reproduced by Scout Headquarters to not only show readers the Movement’s social necessity, but to help spread Scouting even further. Both Prince and Smith were praised for their actions. Smith was lauded as a hero not because he showed courage despite his youth, but that he assisted in the

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<sup>360</sup> “The Health of the Nation,” Barrow Cadbury Trust: The Cadbury Family, A Tradition of Philanthropy,” Birmingham, Central Library, MS466/152/14, p. 4.

<sup>361</sup> *Scout Tests and how to pass them*, p. 174.

<sup>362</sup> Ibid.

<sup>363</sup> Ibid.

<sup>364</sup> Ibid.

rescue effort as a Scout. Scouts achieved praise by casting off the perceived trappings of youth and contributed to civic and communal efforts as mindful citizens.

In Edinburgh, Scout Jardine Thompson received praise for acts of heroism, which again, reflected Headquarters' attempt to position Scouts as community lookouts. Thompson, a Scout in the 42<sup>nd</sup> Edinburgh Troop, was lauded for "helping to rescue two ladies from drowning."<sup>365</sup> This story not only exemplified Scouting's encouragement to perform 'good turns' for the community, but highlights the specific health and safety training boys could receive in the Scouts. A boy could earn the Missioner Badge, which required "general elementary knowledge of sick-nursing; invalid cookery, sick-room attendance, bed-making and ventilation."<sup>366</sup> Emphasis on medical training and health, not only for the sake of individual wellbeing, but for the application of the practice in the field, was encouraged by Headquarters and reflected in the works of Scouts on the ground level. This responsibility for the safety of their communities symbolised Scouts' ascension from children playing at a game, to active participants in national health efforts.

What these examples show, therefore, was that a structure of praise was established to award boys who performed actions of public safety and moral regulation. Adults from the literary field and Scout Headquarters commended boys' who demonstrated self-initiative in achieving badges, constructing activities and curriculum, and serving as stewards of their communities. Their own self-discipline is also reflective of the grassroots nature of the pre-war Movement. While boys were encouraged by Baden-Powell to follow the principles and laws, the participation of the local, enthusiastic boys most receptive to the Chief Scout's message amplified the Movement's goals. That boys themselves became the disseminators of morality in their troops and stewards of health and safety in their communities, serves as

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<sup>365</sup> *Boy Scouts Roll of Honour*, Scout Association Archives, <[www.scoutsrecords.org/collection.php?dil=&icerik=43&bparent=0](http://www.scoutsrecords.org/collection.php?dil=&icerik=43&bparent=0)>.

<sup>366</sup> *Scout Tests and how to pass them*, p. 177.



an example of how self-discipline and initiative functioned in the lived Scouting experience of these boys.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter demonstrates that these enthusiastic troop founders and leaders took Baden-Powell's books and broader beliefs and appropriated it into their own lives, yet also adapted them for their own purposes and created a Scouting experience based on their own principles. Furthermore, these boys were not voiceless, passive individuals in a movement dominated from the top, but active participating agents in the Scouting Movement. We saw how drills and activities had the dual purpose of encouraging health and linking personal fitness with national efficiency. Likewise, these Scout testimonies demonstrate how local individuals became both arbiters of Scouting's message and active stewards over the moral and physical wellbeing of their fellow Scouts. In promoting health and character to their Scouts, these young leaders contributed to a standing discourse of class inequality, reinforced Scouting's moral education, and willingly and cheerfully took up positions as Baden-Powell's young knights of Britain.

Likewise, this chapter has shown that Scouts such as Maurice Gamon and Alexander Fisher used the Scouting Movement to suit their own purposes. That these individuals used Scouting as a mechanism through which they could proselytise and instruct other boys on morality demonstrates how the Movement's local identity was determined from the bottom, not the top. While official Headquarters had its own ideas on morality and character development, it was the self-discipline and initiative of the local boys that amplified (and occasionally diverted) Scouting's principles.

It was health-building efforts and training that, as the next chapter will demonstrate, allowed Scouts to engage directly with national service during wartime. Baden-Powell stressed the importance of in-the-field medical care during battle or camping situations. The *Scouts' War Book*, published by Lloyd's Weekly News during the First World War encouraged boys to achieve badges specific to wartime needs, such as Cyclist and Ambulance Man Badges, and promoted training in First Aid to be used in case of bombings.<sup>367</sup> The personal testimonies from the Scouts in this chapter reflected broader Edwardian efforts to promote health and efficiency in youth and show ways in which textual instruction encouraged from the top was incorporated into the everyday Scout Experience. The next chapter will examine the ways in which these health and character-building ideas were translated from the personal body into national service and communal responsibility.

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<sup>367</sup> *Scouts War Book* (London: Lloyd's Weekly News), Scout Association Archives, World War I, no. 118.

## **Chapter V. Scouts on Display: Nationhood, Service, and Public Representation**

Scouting offered boys the opportunity to contribute to local community efforts through a movement dedicated to civic responsibility and national efficiency. Prior to 1914, Scouts spent a great deal of effort gaining recognition in their communities through parades, camps, and performances. Once Britain declared war on Germany, the Scouts mobilised their efforts into national service and participated in activities such as coast watching, police assistance, and message delivery. Many boys also acted as guard patrols for railways, streets, and major public spaces. While acting at the local level, these boys imagined they contributed to a greater national and imperial effort, an idea which this chapter will demonstrate was reflected by the boys themselves in their writings, texts, and testimonies. They worked for their communities, yet through their Scouting experience they reinforced broader British service efforts and became direct participants in Edwardian imperial culture.

This chapter will demonstrate how boys interacted with their local communities through their association with Scouting. The boys and troops highlighted in this chapter believed their efforts at personal character and health development, demonstrated in the previous chapter, contributed to the overall efficiency of the nation and Empire. This chapter will also examine the boys' role in civic service and communal responsibility. By looking at how Scouts participated in local action, presented themselves to the public, and interacted with the community through their Scouting associations, we will get a better understanding of the ways in which these boys acted locally, yet thought nationally. These boys—members of a nationalist, civic-minded youth movement—understood and engaged with the broader imperial culture of Edwardian Britain. Finally, this chapter also contributes to the wide and rich historiography concerning imperial consciousness by examining how these boys, many of whom were heavily involved in national service and participated in the First World War,

linked their association with Scouting and the nation and Empire as a whole. Through their Movement experience, young Scouts contributed to national service efforts and reinforced broader images of Edwardian imperial culture.

I have divided this chapter into four main sections. First this chapter will examine imperial imagery and representations that appeared in Scouts' records. Doing so will highlight the ways in which these boys engaged with the Empire in their Scouting experience through literature and journal taking. Second, I will analyse troop performances and public displays. That many troops represented themselves to the public through military-style games and pageantry indicates how they wanted to be seen by a wider audience. This section will also highlight the importance public recognition and legitimacy was to many boys involved. Next, this chapter will examine the role of hero worship and encouragements of bravery in the lived Scout experience. Finally, I will examine the ways boys contributed directly to national service through efforts such as police assistance and coast watching. Such jobs offered boys the opportunity to put their training into action and become real defenders of Britain.

### **Imperial Imagery**

As stated in the thesis introduction, we have to understand there was a certain performative aspect in Scout writings, especially ones monitored by adults or those on public display. We cannot, however, dismiss these boys' statements or assume they did not believe what they wrote. What we can demonstrate, however is that these boys reflected many images of the imperial culture that surrounded the public and the educational life of Edwardian boys. Historians of British imperialism have spent much of the last several decades debating the extent to which individuals and collective bodies of people not directly involved with the

daily function of empire knew or cared about the nation's imperial efforts. By examining how these Scouts operated in national service in their local communities, we can get a better insight into how individuals contributed to the cause of empire in their daily lives.

Furthermore, their commitment to service was reflected in the activities of the troops and testimonies of the individuals themselves. While it is nearly impossible to show if Scouts contributed to imperial causes at the local level for the sake of their parents or troop leaders, given the fact they understood their Scouting duties within a broader framework of patriotic contribution suggests a level of compliance and agency within the nationalist and wartime efforts.

A scrapbook left to the Scout Association Archives by an anonymous Scout from our period demonstrates that the Empire, nation, and Scouting were all linked in this boy's mind. The album, which is comprised predominately of clippings from other texts, begins with sketches of ancient Rome, Egypt, and Assyria, portraying grand palaces and ornately dressed people, as well as several photographs of cities in Europe, and an obituary of W. M. Ellis, a soldier who participated in the infamous Charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava.<sup>368</sup>

Immortalized by Tennyson's poem, the Light Brigade was a common staple in youth publications designed to illicit emotions of patriotic duty in its young readers. Baden-Powell also often evoked the erroneous battle charge to instil in his Scouts the message of obedience. In *Young Knights of the Empire*, Baden-Powell described the events of the Light Brigade's charge and its legacy, then wrote "that is why Scouts to-day have as their motto the single word, **"BALACLAVA"** to remind them that if they get an order which it is a bore or even a danger to perform, their duty is to do as their brave fathers did at Balaclava, and carry it out cheerily and well."<sup>369</sup> Baden-Powell consistently reminded boys that they were the decedents of brave British soldiers and heroes, charged with protecting the nation. This image of the

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<sup>368</sup> *Album*, Scout Association Archive, TSA/PER/11/1.

<sup>369</sup> Baden-Powell, *Young Knights*, p. 7.

doomed charge, one that appeared throughout boys' magazines and Scouting texts, was replicated in this boy's album and suggests a superficial reflection of the Movement's official portrayal of the Empire.

As the Charge of the Light Brigade symbolised British soldiers' tenacity, the scrapbook continued by showing images that demonstrated the greatness of Britain and the white, European 'race.' This first photo is of King George V and President Raymond Poincaré touring Paris during the king's 1914 visit. The *Daily Mirror* clippings portrayed his visit as a "triumphal progress" that further cemented the Anglo/French alliance in the months before the First World War.<sup>370</sup> This boy then displayed a graph entitled "Typical Heads of some Living Races" that shows various men of the world with caricatured and exaggerated dress and physical features typical of scientific racism of the period. Displaying a wide spectrum of imperial imagery, this boy included a list with photographs, sketchings, and short biographies of some of Europe's most famous empire builders dating back to the fifteenth century. These examples are a sample from a menagerie of imperial iconography that exists in this boy's album. This boy's display of race, diplomacy, and Empire Building, in its sporadic use of imperial images, reflected a broader Edwardian imperial culture that resembled what he may have encountered in the likes of *Chums*, *Boys' Own Paper*, or *The Scout*.

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<sup>370</sup> *Album*.



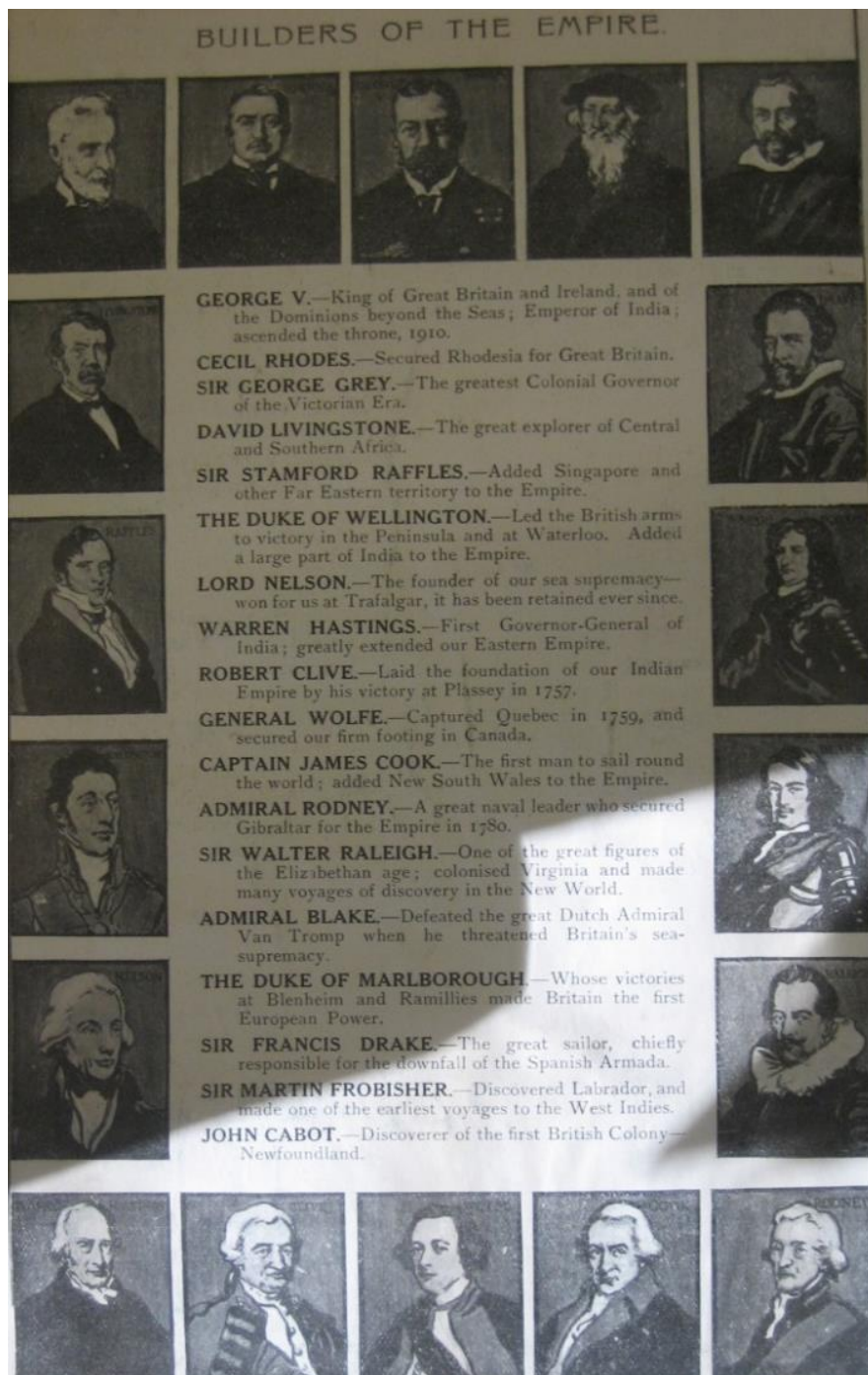
**Figure 4.1. King George President Raymond Poincaré.**  
“Album,” Scout Association Archives, TSA/PER/11/1.





**Figure 4.2. “Typical Heads of Some Living Races.”**  
 “Album,” Scout Association Archives, TSA/PER/11/1.





**Figure 4.3. Heroes of Empire.**

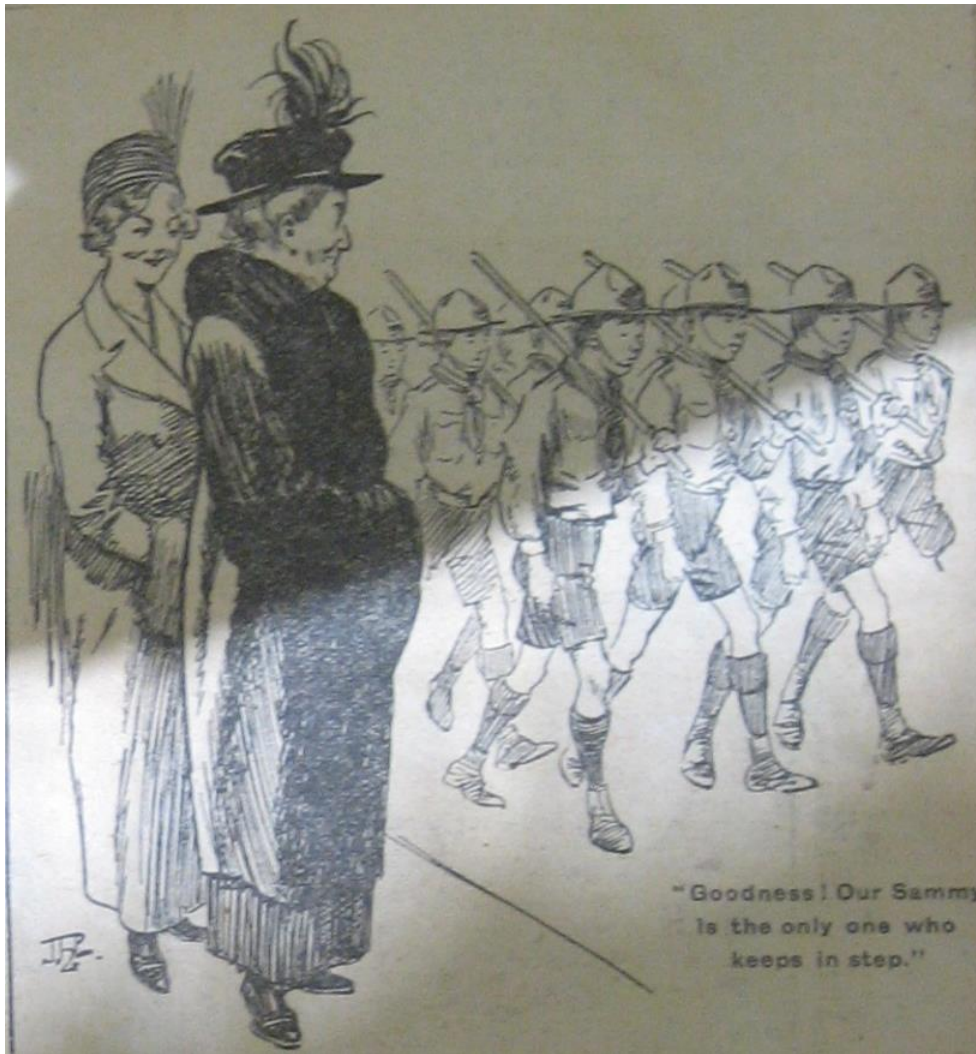
“Album,” Scout Association Archives, TSA/PER/11/1.

The most crucial issue in this particular boy’s scrapbook is that he linked his personal Scout identity with broader imaginations of imperialism and nationhood. The chart of the “Builders of Empire” in particular reflected Baden-Powell’s assertion that Scouts were the inheritors of the burden of defence and civilization. *Scouting for Boys* portrayed men like

Francis Drake and John Smith as “great scouts,” linking the reader’s Scout association with the nations.<sup>371</sup> Another image from the scrapbook shows, placed after the imperial segments, Scout activities. This particular clipping is of a group of marching boys, with proud relatives looking on their “Sammy’s” progress in the Movement. Scouting was a discipline to many involved and one earned awards and accolades for their performance. The performance was linked as well with military-style marching and public demonstration of Scouting. Images collected in scrapbooks, whether from newspapers, magazines, or books, demonstrate what types of material Scouts were reading or to which they were exposed. Furthermore, what these boys decided to save shows a deeper connection with the images and texts, just as their direct journal documentation. When photo albums and scrapbooks are juxtaposed with Baden-Powell’s writings and the wider imperial culture of Edwardian Britain, there is a clear dissemination of ideas. The Scout’s ideas were formed through a myriad of textual influences concerning British Imperialism, while the boys lived within a patriotic society. The individuals who comprised the Movement likewise often shared their authority figures’ ideological frameworks and were active agents in spreading the Movement’s message throughout Britain and beyond.

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<sup>371</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: Original 1908 Edition*, p. 201.



**Figure 4.4. Scouts in formation**

“Album,” Scout Association Archives, TSA/PER/11/1.

On 27 April 1898 the boys’ magazine *Chums* ran a story asserting the patriotic devotion of British schoolboys.<sup>372</sup> The story, entitled “Do British Boys Love their Country,” described an occasion in an unnamed boarding school where a teacher, “guilty of airing (his) private dogma in the schoolroom,” told his students that “Britain has dishonourably acquired her possessions by the combined forces of lead and whisky.”<sup>373</sup> The article’s author said that the students in the story took great offence at their teacher’s accusation. Beaming with pride in the actions of the schoolboys, the author wrote that “unable to bear the stinging insults to

<sup>372</sup> See previous chapter relating to health and character.

<sup>373</sup> “Do British Boys Love their Country,” *Chums*, no. 294, vol. VI (27 April 1898), University of Liverpool, Sydney Jones Library Special Collections.

their Queen and country any longer, the boys rose in a body, crumpled up their exercise books, and hurled them simultaneously at the pedagogue's head."<sup>374</sup> In response to their teacher's condemnation, the boys shouted "Lies, lies...we don't believe a word of it! Three cheers for Victoria! Hip, hip, hurrah!"<sup>375</sup> The story, either a real event or fictional, was in response to a greater question among social thinkers concerning the patriotism of teenaged boys. Baden-Powell himself encouraged boys to think of "country first" and "self second."<sup>376</sup> *Chums* attempted to downplay the concern by showing that national devotion (this specific type of conservative patriotism) among youth was strong, which simultaneously encouraged similar ideology in its readers and challenged them to fight against anyone who besmirched the notion of Britain's imperial benevolence.

This issue of *Chums* was written in 1898, during the period, as examined in chapter three, when social efforts were designed to combat what Richard Soloway calls the "decided waning of the extraordinary 'racial energy' that had carried imperial Britain to pre-eminence in the nineteenth century."<sup>377</sup> Illustrating this impulse, the article painted boys as patriots and the instructor as a subversive intellectual in an attempt to inspire its young readers to emulate the imperially devoted students. Most importantly for this study, however, is that this *Chums* story reflected a fear many adults had about the state of boys' patriotism and national devotion. The perception of slipping patriotism was enough to encourage people to combat the problem and for Baden-Powell to create the Scouting Movement. The recorded testimony of the Scouts, including the scrapbook shown above, demonstrates ways in which boys represented and incorporated imperial imagery and nationalist ideas in their Scouting experience.

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<sup>374</sup> Ibid.

<sup>375</sup> Ibid.

<sup>376</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: Original 1908 Edition*, p. 29

<sup>377</sup> Soloway, "Counting the Degenerates," p. 137.

We know patriotism is more complicated than reductionist pieces of propaganda like the *Chums* story show. For many young Britons, Baden-Powell was the catalyst for their participation with imperial and national service, while Scouting was the conduit through which they both expressed their patriotism and contributed to the nation. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg observes that “nations need subjects, men and women who identify passionately with their nation and are dedicated to its service.”<sup>378</sup> The Scouting Movement was a vehicle for boys’ desire to materialise the patriotism developed through the Edwardian imperial culture into active civic engagement. Likewise, as Eric Hobsbawm argued, nationalism and imperial devotion provided Britain’s middle-classes with a sense of collective identity and offered them positions as the country’s “true defenders,” we can see the same structures developed in the Scouting narrative.<sup>379</sup> Although Hobsbawm’s observation on the middle class was certainly not universally experienced, many boys in the Scouting Movement took on the imagined role of Britain’s defender and expressed themselves through a paternalistic and nationalistic framework.

### **Empire and Scouts on display**

While the *Chums* article demonstrates the magazine’s attempt to portray British boys as patriots, the Scout diaries and troop records themselves must be understood not only as testimony from the actors in the Movement, but as ways which boys expressed their

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<sup>378</sup> Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *This Violent Empire: The Birth of an American National Identity* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), p. 18. For more literature on imperial and national identity, see: MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire*; Bernard Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists: Empire, Society, and Culture in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Andrew S. Thompson, *The Empire Strikes Back?: The Impact of Imperialism on Britain from the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2005); Krishan Kumar, “Empire, Nation, and National Identities,” *Britain’s Experience of Empire in the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Andrew Thompson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 298-329; Cherry Leonardi, “The Power of culture and the cultures of power: John MacKenzie and the study of imperialism,” *Writing Imperial Histories*, ed. by Andrew S. Thompson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), pp.49-73; and C. A. Hagerman, *Britain’s Imperial Muse: The Classics, Imperialism, and the Indian Empire, 1784-1914* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013).

<sup>379</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire: 1875-1914* (New York: Vintage Books, 1987), p. 160.

involvement with Scouting and broader society. Looking at how these boys presented themselves in their writings and parades gives us a better understanding of how they saw their roles in Scouting and their communities. This chapter will now examine troop presentations, shows, and parades. Looking at the ways in which boys' presented themselves to audiences outside of their own troops allows us to connect the local Scouting experience with broader imperial and nationalistic themes the boys encountered in the literature and society.

A programme from a performance by troops from southwest London provides some insight into how Scouts presented themselves to the community. Troops from various areas divided the performances along themes that reinforced Scouting's principles of physical and moral fitness and national service. Balham and Tooting and Battersea displayed boxing and gymnastics respectively, while Clapham demonstrated the "Victoria Cross Race (Ambulance)" and the Fulham boys performed a bridge building display.<sup>380</sup> While these displays show the health and vocational aspects of the Movement official Scouting stressed, they reflect how these ideas from the top were performed by the boys at the local level. Furthermore, we can see how the image these boys wished to portray of themselves stressed fitness and service, linking their Scouting identity with broader national themes.

Looking at a programme from of Devon Scout troop also illuminates how racial elements of Edwardian imperial culture were reflected in boys' Scouting experience, while contradicting Scouting's official message of racial and ethnic inclusivity. The Scouts performed what they called a 'nigger minstrel' show, a performance in which white, English boys darkened their skin with paint or shoe polish and sang songs in a manner they believed represented black American or African music and customs. They performed acts with titles such as "All aboard for Dixieland," "Are you from Dixie," and "Old Nigger Joe" in an

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<sup>380</sup> "Boy Scout Association, Grand Rally," Scout Association Archives, TSA/GRO/COU/LON/16/1/2/1.

attempt to mimic images from the American South.<sup>381</sup> Likewise, Scout Ken Purser from Wallington recalled that his troop “had about a dozen [boys] inaa (*sic*) Nigger Minstrel troupe with blackened faces.”<sup>382</sup> While these representations of black peoples were highly characterised and demonstrated a poor understanding of the cultures on which these performances were based, they were common forms of entertainment in Edwardian Britain. As Robert Nowatzki observes, blackface performances from America became increasingly popular across the Atlantic during the height of British abolitionism, the acts became less political and more comedic-based throughout the Victorian age with the rise of colonial and imperial efforts.<sup>383</sup> That these Scouts appropriated American and specifically Southern American images and juxtaposed them with British imperial imagery that were commonplace in other Scouting performances reflects the Movement’s imperial associations and the broader attitudes members brought with them. It is not surprising that boys replicated shows to which they would have been exposed in broader society, nor are their depictions of black peoples’ unusual for the time.<sup>384</sup> Scout shows are yet another microcosmic example of local activity that highlights the ways in which these boys reflected broader imperial images and well as how the Movement was used as a tool through which young Britons expressed larger understandings and interpretations of Edwardian society.

While Scout performances had the combined effect of gaining public notoriety and earning funds, each of which reflected prescribed Scouting values of self-sufficiency and displays of efficiency, they also highlight the intrinsic nationalist and patriotic nature of the Movement. As argued in the third chapter, individuals joined Scouting for a variety of

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<sup>381</sup> “Dunsford Nigger Minstrel,” Scout Association Archives, TSA/GRO/COU/LON/2/1/A15/3.

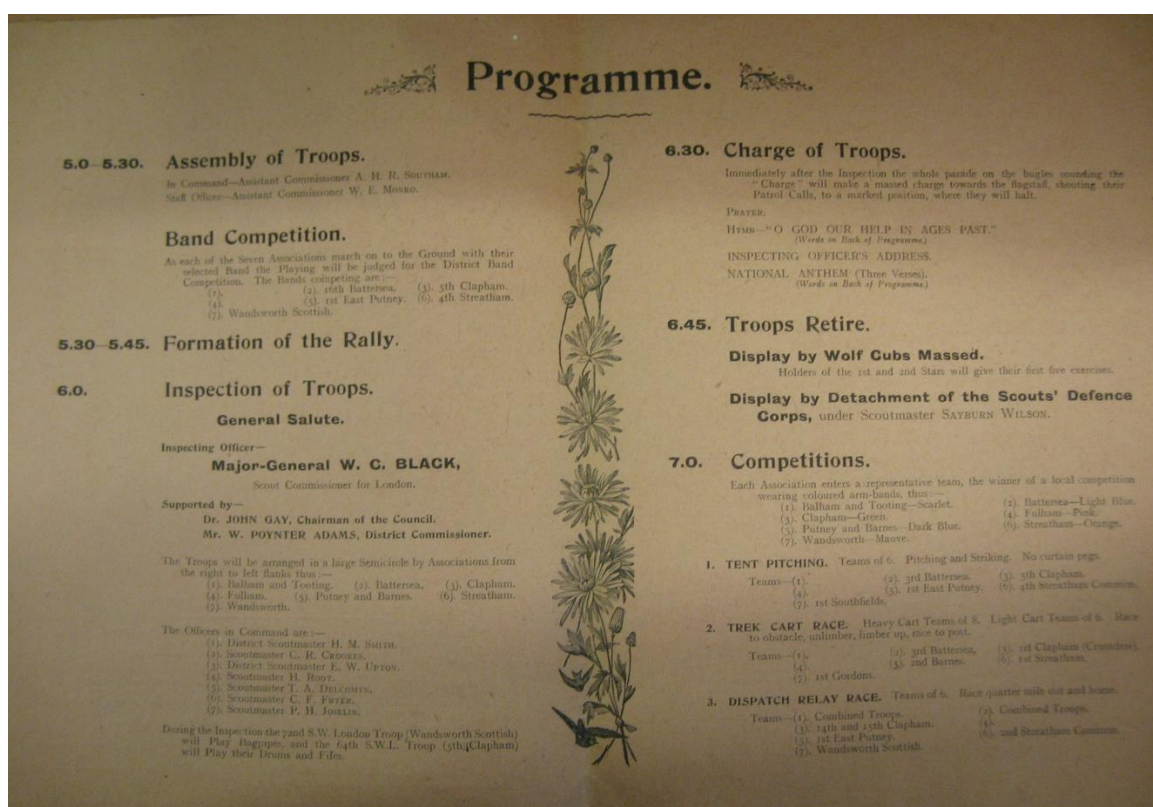
<sup>382</sup> Purser, “1<sup>st</sup> Wallington,” p. 7.

<sup>383</sup> Robert Nowatzki, *Representing African Americans in Transatlantic Abolitionism and Blackface Minstrelsy* (Baton Rouge, LA: University of Louisiana Press, 2010), pp. 60-61.

<sup>384</sup> For more information on ‘blackface’ shows across the Atlantic, see: J. S. Bratton, “English Ethiopians: British Audiences and Black-Face Acts, 1835-1865,” *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 11.2 (1981), pp. 127-142; Simon Featherstone, “The Blackface Atlantic: interpreting British minstrelsy,” *Journal of Victorian Culture* (1 Sept. 1998), pp. 234-251; Sarah Meer, *Uncle Tom mania: slavery, minstrelsy, and transatlantic culture in the 1950s* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2005); Michael Pickering, *Blackface Minstrelsy in Britain* (Oxford: Routledge, 2008); and Nowatzki, *Abolitionism and Blackface Minstrelsy*.



reasons. Yet once involved in the Movement, they were often subjected to a consistent barrage of patriotic imagery that reinforced Baden-Powell's teachings on nationhood. Nowhere was this more evident than in the Scouts' public displays and performances. It is well established that Scouting leadership rooted Scout activities and images in nationalism, local performances, however, also indicate that individual troops linked their Scouting association with British exceptionalism and patriotism. There is a clear set-list of patriotic events in the same programme from a southwest London performance in 1916 mentioned above. That Baden-Powell himself performed the troop inspection of this particular event suggests a level of officiousness and perhaps even a performative effort on the part of the boys and troop leaders, yet it also dictates how these events were meant to be consumed by the public.



**Figure 4.5. London Troop Programme.**

"Grand Rally of the Southwest Troops," Scout Association Archives, TSA/GRO/COU/LON/16/1/2/1.



Alexander Fisher from Greater Manchester reflected the dual effect that raising funds and the recognition gained performing shows had on boys. He stated that his troop earned a £5 net profit from the concert which they spent on camping gear for the troop: tents, pegs, and cooking equipment, all items which belonged to the troop as a whole, not the individual Scout.<sup>385</sup> The variation of performances, again, were similar to other popular shows at the time. The Mersey Heaton boys performed ventriloquism acts, musical performances, and short skits, many of which were humorous in nature.<sup>386</sup> From these plays, we can see these boys engaging with imperial and racial texts ubiquitous in popular culture at the time, and reinforcing discourses and images of the exotic and effeminate Arab:

my shoes (of what I used as shoes) had long pointed toes, similar to the footwear of an Arab...the crowning feature was a beautiful pair of glittering earrings dangling from the lobes of my ears. My performance was an exhibition of general imitations and impersonations, including the animals of the farm yard, a few from the zoo, a saw, sky rocket, fish, wasp, bagpipe, electric shock, bugle calls, etc., etc. Of course, I was 'bronzed' with grease paints, face, neck, ears, hands and arms suffering alike, and I had a very black moustache and eyebrows.<sup>387</sup>

Fisher's depiction of Arabic peoples mirrors the images and representations present in much of the youth literature and school curriculum of the time and reflect how he understood and imagined non-British peoples. Fisher's portrayal of Arabic peoples was derived from what Joanna de Groot describes as a "web of influences and assumptions" that linked "public life, academic and progression practice and wider cultural experience."<sup>388</sup> In this regard, the Fisher and his Scout troop were both consumers of broader texts and contributors to the imagined sphere of sphere of imperial culture.

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<sup>385</sup> Fisher, *My Life*, pp. 17-19.

<sup>386</sup> Ibid.

<sup>387</sup> Ibid, pp. 17-18.

<sup>388</sup> Joanna de Groot, *Empire and History Writing in Britain, c. 1750-2012* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), p. 197.



**Figure 4.6. Alexander Fisher's 'Arab' Costume.**  
 Alexander Fisher, *My Life*, Scout Association Archives

The Scouting Movement and boys at the local level used public displays and presentations to spread their message. Indeed public Scout displays appropriated existing nationalist demonstration styles of marching and parading, while Boy Scout troops were almost from the outset of the Movement incorporated into events.<sup>389</sup> In this regard, and with pressure from Baden-Powell, Scouting became another component of national celebrations.

<sup>389</sup> Pryke, "Popularity of Nationalism," p. 310.

Scouting gave many boys a sense of accomplishment and honour previously withheld from younger Britons. Jon Springhall discusses if the Boy Scouts trained boys in citizenship or soldiering, yet we can see from these Scout testimonies that the issue was not so straightforward.<sup>390</sup> Military service was one aspect of a range of ways in which one could demonstrate their patriotism. While willingness to fight for one's country was an essential component of citizenship to Baden-Powell, we can see from public demonstrations and from boys' comment on them, that these troop founders used parades as a means to show off their patriotic and Scout associations to the public, while some in fact wrote of yearning for the time when they would trade in their Scout uniform for a soldier's.

The boys of 57<sup>th</sup> North London troop, like many others, spent much of their early years parading in public spaces. One Scout, A. H. N., recorded his troop's marching activities. He wrote:

In April, 1909, a Public Display by the Troop, at the Corbin Hall, Crouch End, was arranged and was presided over on the first evening by Major-Gen. Sir Ronald Lane (deputising as Chief Scout during General Baden-Powell's absence abroad) which proved most successful, and was fully attended on each night by an appreciative audience.<sup>391</sup>

Ronald Lane was not only a general in the British Army, but a descendent of the famed Jane Lane, Lady Fisher, who played a key role in 'The Escape of Charles II' after the Battle of Worcester. While this military presence in the Scouting Movement's origins is significant and will be the focus of the next chapter, what is necessary at this stage is to understand the importance of public display. These events were crucial in establishing presence and legitimacy for Scouting. Not only did this troop present themselves to their community, but they had official backing from Scout Headquarters and the respected military establishment. A. H. N. also showed he was aware of the significance when he observed "this display served

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<sup>390</sup> See Springhall, "Baden-Powell and the Scouting Movement before 1920."

<sup>391</sup> A. H. N., *57<sup>th</sup> North London Troop: Baden-Powell Boy Scouts* (Dec. 1910), Scout Association Archives, 57<sup>th</sup>/52<sup>nd</sup> N. London Troop, no. 203.

the double purpose of increasing local interest in the movement, and raising sufficient funds to put the Troop on a sound financial basis.”<sup>392</sup> The troop reflected Baden-Powell’s lessons on industriousness and self-sufficiency, while the Scout author acknowledged that spreading the Movement’s celebrity was not only a concern for Scout Headquarters, but for the boys themselves.

Meanwhile, back in the Manchester area, Alexander Fisher understood that in order for his association with Scouting to be successful, he would have to achieve the recognition of the public. He recalled in his memoir (written at around age twenty) that he and his fellow Scouts were going to commence on a public, nine-mile march only to find that although he, “very anxious to create a good impression on passers by (*sic*)” was left alone by his friends.<sup>393</sup> Undeterred, however, Fisher wrote that “after waiting a considerable period, and seeing that no member of my patrol had put in his appearance, I determined to go on the journey myself.”<sup>394</sup> Fisher imagined himself the sole representative of the Scouting Movement in his local area and was happy to assume the role. He not only felt pride in his involvement, but believed the community “admired” him for his efforts.<sup>395</sup> Convinced of Scouting’s morally and socially beneficial values, Fisher was eager to achieve recognition for his participation and commitment in the Movement. Scouting was the way in which Fisher, and many other boys, chose to demonstrate their social associations. Public recognition as a Scout linked him to greater moral, civic, and national institutions.

For Fisher, parading was an important aspect of demonstrating his patriotism. Scouting allowed him to represent himself as a member of the Boy Scouts and promote his nation and understanding of Britishness through his personal Scout identity. He wrote that Scouting “is

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<sup>392</sup> Ibid.

<sup>393</sup> Fisher, *My Life*, p. 10.

<sup>394</sup> Ibid, p. 11.

<sup>395</sup> Ibid, p. 10.

the most perfect cure for unbrotherly feelings, selfishness and slackness ever yet invented.”<sup>396</sup> Again, we see a Scout who not only connected his and his fellow Scouts’ personal, moral, and physical development with the Movement, but also to the wellbeing of wider society and even the world. Scouting was an apparatus and appendage of broader Edwardian imperial culture; Scouts like Fisher made their Scouting identity synonymous with nationhood.

Photos collected by Scout Edgar Morton provide us with visual examples collected by an individual Scout, rather than newspaper or official photographs taken from larger-scale public spectacles. The first photo shows a group of Boy Scouts, presumably during a camp, marching to church.<sup>397</sup> Not only did this group march demonstrate a Scout presence to the community in the manner Fisher emphasised, but it connected the Movement to Britain’s religious authority. Scouting was not simply a band of children playing games, but an organised movement of civic-minded youth working towards social improvement. While Baden-Powell maintained Scouting’s secularism, it was tied to the Church of England and the Christian god in a similar manner to other secular or not overtly religious British institutions. Scout Headquarters encouraged boys to attend religious services more for civic responsibility than for worshipping Jesus Christ. The leaders of a Rochdale troop promised their Scouts in 1911 that “special marks will be given from time to time such as for (monthly) Church Parades,” in order to promote attendance and participation in public events.<sup>398</sup> Morton’s photograph shows older boys, probably high ranked, carrying flags and leading younger boys in the procession. Morton’s troop also marched to mass behind a bugle and drum section, both bass and snare, which not only mimicked military parades, but magnified their public presence. It connected their troop with other nationally recognized public displays of patriotism and authority, while promoting the Scouting Movement’s new role in Britain’s broader imperial culture.

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<sup>396</sup> Ibid, p. 25.

<sup>397</sup> *Edgar Morton Photo Album*, Scout Association Archives, TC/18.

<sup>398</sup> *St. James Boy Scout Register*, Scout Association Archives, Rochdale Scouts.



**Figure 4.7. “Off to Church.”**

*Edgar Morton Photo Album, Scout Association Archives, TC/18.*

Juxtaposing Morton’s photograph of his troop marching to church next to the photograph of their public parade reveals similarities in motivation.<sup>399</sup> Both were concerned with public presentation, an expression of Scout identity and association. The image Morton’s troop displayed to the public was one that represented discipline, church attendance, and morality. Unsurprisingly, newspapers and Scout Headquarters collected these photographs which contributed to society’s understanding of the Boy Scout organisation throughout the twentieth century and today. The ‘wholesome’ image of the boys is what Baden-Powell and other officials wished to convey to the public. What is important to take from this album, however, along with Fisher’s and A. H. N.’s accounts, is that these are images the enthusiastic Scouts chose to collect and record themselves. As the pioneers of

<sup>399</sup> *Edgar Morton Photo Album.*

the Movement, their experience was manifested through the story their sources tell. While they did not always replicate Baden-Powell's desires and lessons exactly, they did represent a youth movement immersed in patriotic imagery that participated in nationalist public demonstrations. Their patriotism was linked with their association with Scouting and showed that they shared in Scouting's official underlying philosophies of civic and moral responsibility.

Scouts displayed their patriotism through their association with Scouting, making the Movement a youth-led arm of imperial culture, with the boys at the centre. A. H. N. wrote that religious bodies, and "Public Men and Local Authorities in all parts of the British Empire" recognized "the true patriotic spirit and loyalty" that lay at the heart of the Movement gave boys "excellent moral training."<sup>400</sup> A. H. N. and other likeminded boys expressed their devotion to their nation through their efforts and affiliation with Scouting. As agents in Scouting's foundation and expansion, individual Scouts and local troops presented themselves as youth dedicated to the advancement and success of their country. This brotherhood, as I argued in chapter three, was predicated upon socially developed ideas and imaginations already cultivated in their minds through their pre-Scout lives. Scouting gave these boys a chance and method in which they could express their patriotism, while public parades and spectacles validated their efforts.

On 4 September 1909, not two years after the initial camp at Brownsea, 11,000 Scouts gathered at the Crystal Palace for the first national Scout rally. This was the first time Baden-Powell was able to show off his movement at the national level. Within the next few years, Scouting received official recognition from the state, praise from political and military leaders, and a royal charter. Even Baden-Powell himself was surprised at the keen interest King Edward and political and military authority figures showed towards the Movement in its

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<sup>400</sup> A. H. N., *57<sup>th</sup> North London Troop*.

earliest years.<sup>401</sup> Visibility was crucial to this rapid success and Baden-Powell understood that mobilising his Scouts in public displays would spread and promote his mission. As demonstrated above, however, prior to officially organised rallies, individual boys and troops took it upon themselves to parade in their local communities. They often relied on traditional methods of marching, adopted from parades and events they to which they would have been exposed throughout their lives, both in their communities and through literature. It was through the individual efforts of these thousands of boys throughout the nation, connected in a Scouting community through text and experience that the Movement spread.

### **Tales of Heroism and Models of Emulation**

Scouting attempted to create an official narrative that showcased the heroism of Scouts, symbolically placing them as ‘knights of the empire’. While Pryke argues that Baden-Powell linked great men of the past with Scouts in order to exert racial superiority and justify Britain’s empire, this chapter has argued that the boys themselves were just as concerned with local or ‘everyday’ efforts.<sup>402</sup> Yet these boys often expressed their communal efforts within a broader, national and imperial framework. When Baden-Powell encouraged boys to do a good turn in their daily lives, he made sure to highlight that actions not only helped those nearby, but strengthened the country as a whole.<sup>403</sup> This section will now examine ways in which Scouts and troops honoured ‘heroic’ actions within their ranks and how these deeds reinforced Scouting’s encouragement to think imperially, while acting locally.

Looking back at the homemade magazine of the 5<sup>th</sup> Clapham Troop, we can see ideas of heroism replicated by these boys. In the May 1909 issues, the young editors included a

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<sup>401</sup> Baden-Powell, *Lessons from the 'Varsity of Life*, p. 289.

<sup>402</sup> Pryke, “Popularity of Nationalism,” p. 317.

<sup>403</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: Original Edition*, p. 213.



newspaper clipping citing that a group of Scouts reported a fire to the authorities.<sup>404</sup>

Likewise, the April 1909 issue included a clipping that commended the actions of a young Scout from the 1<sup>st</sup> Gravesend Troop named George Batcheldor who received the silver medal for “his gallant act in saving a comrade, aged ten and a half years, from drowning.”<sup>405</sup>

Including stories of Scout heroism in a troop magazine further promoted an archetypal Scout model, justified Scouting’s existence to the community and, most importantly, demonstrated through individuals at the local level manifesting official images themselves. It is important to view these types of sources within the wider framework of Scout ephemera. The official publications included stories exulting Scout bravery and so did locally produced magazines. In mimicking the style and content of official publications, *The Raven* reinforced the official narrative that encouraged heroism and further transmitted the Scouting message of civic responsibility. Local leaders, in the same fashion as Scout Headquarters, spread Scouting principles to their readers and communities.

Local troops also praised its members who achieved public recognition or enacted central ideals of bravery in real life. Scout Alwyn Dawson from the 1<sup>st</sup> Chiswick Troop recorded that his troop leader, a Scout named Bill Neighbour, “had a special concern for good turns.”<sup>406</sup> He wrote that sometime around 1909 or 1910, a Scout went “to one of the worst slums in the district” to aid an ill person.<sup>407</sup> He continues to write of the young Scout’s experience that they “met as anticipated by a barrage of cat calls, rude signs, derisive comments and more solid objects” that included a chamber pot “complete with contents.”<sup>408</sup> While attempting to perform a basic Scout activity of “doing a good turn,” these boys faced down adversity from people perceived to be of a lower social station and performed their duty. The troop rewarded and praised the boys’ efforts and recorded their deeds in their troop

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<sup>404</sup> *The Raven*, 5.2 (May 1909), Scout Association Archives, TSA/PER/100/1, p. 113.

<sup>405</sup> *The Raven*, 4.2 (April 1909), p. 84.

<sup>406</sup> Dawson, *1<sup>st</sup> Chiswick*, p. 11.

<sup>407</sup> Ibid.

<sup>408</sup> Ibid.

recorded, symbolising Baden-Powell's encouragement to perform one's duty despite the odds. This example of Scout heroics also link back to the 'class' conflicts that occurred between Scouts and other members of the public. The implication of danger in Dawson's depiction of his troop's duties reinforced the 'knight' narrative and further legitimised Scouting efforts in wider society. In this regard, the burden of national service was not only carried by soldiers, police, or other devoted groups, but by the Scouting Movement as well.

The recollections of Scout Ted Neate of the 1<sup>st</sup> Wallington also portray the patrol as local heroes and reinforce the importance of their function in society. Later in life, Neate described an incident where he and his comrades assisted in putting out a fire while they were on a summer camp sometime between 1911 and 1913. The language contained in this story, as well as the way in which Neate described the boys' reaction to the fire, is important to examine. He began by stating "one day we put on a display on the lawn at the vicarage for the benefit of the many friends we had made in the neighbourhood."<sup>409</sup> Again, the importance of public display is apparent in this individual's Scouting experience. There is also an implication in the testimony that the boys' demonstration was indeed an advantage for the community more than the Scouts themselves. Neate's statement reflected the official narrative that local Scouting activities had wider benefits for the community at large. Furthermore, Neate's assumption that he paraded with his troop due to popular demand links in with many of these boys' desire for legitimacy, as highlighted above. Neate wants us to understand that he did not merely treat Scouting as a leisurely for its own sake, but that he responded to greater community needs.

The Wallington Scout continued his tale of heroism by recalling that during their performance, "we suddenly heard the fire alarm sounded on the bugle by the Scout who had

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<sup>409</sup> Ted Neate, *The Early Years*, "1<sup>st</sup> Wallington," Scout Association Archives, TSA/GRO/COU/LON/2/1/A15/2.  
 \*No pagination in the document.

been left in camp to look out for emergencies.”<sup>410</sup> Here Neate stressed that it was Scout preparation and practice that notified the community of the danger. Throughout this testimony, Scouting is placed at the centre of the emergency efforts. Once he and his fellow Scouts rushed back to camp to see what was wrong, they discovered there was “an enormous bush fire a few miles away.”<sup>411</sup> Upon hearing the news, Neate stated the Scouts “went for [the fire] as the crow flies, over railway lines and everything else that we could discover and eventually arrived at a pretty considerable bush fire.”<sup>412</sup> Once they arrived they assisted other people already on the scene in extinguishing the fire. The incident, according to the Scout, occurred on property belonging to the Duke of Norfolk. The following morning, the boys were awoken at their camp by the duke’s bailiff, who gave the boys his thanks and praise, as well as a “substantial gift” towards a Scout building fund the boys had already established.<sup>413</sup> Not only did Neate place the Scouts at the centre of the action, responding to the needs of the community, but he stated they were crucial in the effort. That their efforts were rewarded by the Duke of Norfolk emphasised and validated their legitimacy as a beneficial community presence for civic good.

Scouting was founded by Baden-Powell largely as a reaction to a perceived degeneration of values among British youth. As argued in previous chapters, boys from more privileged families were seen as soft and weak, while boys from working-class and poorer areas could easily fall victim to vice and vulgarity. As middle-class boys were meant to act as role models for those below them, so too did Baden-Powell display hero figures as symbols of emulation to his scouts. The Chief Scout often recounted the deeds of men like Jon Smith and Captain Cook, fictional figures like King Arthur and Beowulf, and fellow Scouts who achieved notoriety for their actions in his texts and speeches as a way to show his

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<sup>410</sup> Ibid.

<sup>411</sup> Ibid.

<sup>412</sup> Ibid.

<sup>413</sup> Ibid.

young audience examples of heroism and link their Scouting associating within a shared national heritage.<sup>414</sup> Looking back at Baden-Powell's analogy of 'being a brick' in terms of what it meant to the idea of nationhood, we can see the concept's implication for a boy's lived experience with Scouting take real meaning. For example, the requirements and Baden-Powell's commentary on the earliest Scout badges demonstrated two important issues: it showcased the practical abilities Scouts had to achieve in order to attain proper citizenship, while the textual instructions given to the young readers highlight the centrality of age. Baden-Powell not only wanted Scouts to work towards becoming proper citizens, he wanted them to abandon what he perceived to be childish frivolities in favour of productive pastimes.

Baden-Powell hoped to impress upon his Scouts the importance individual heroism had in strengthening group or national success. The Chief Scout encouraged boys to "think of the pluck" of past Britons who "had to overcome savages," harsh terrain, and European rivals to establish settlements and win glory for Great Britain.<sup>415</sup> He recommended books to boys that promoted individual heroism like *Heroes of Pioneering* by Edgar Sanderson and *Deeds that Won the Empire* by W.H. Fitchett.<sup>416</sup> Assigning such material had the dual purposes of placing Scouting in the lineage of great men of Britain, while showing the boys that 'greatness' starts with individual action. While these men earned an honourable reputation for themselves, their deeds served a greater purpose. They explored, fought, and gained territory for their mother country and crown. Baden-Powell stressed the importance of a Scout brotherhood, yet, he consistently stressed individual action should benefit the group or nation. As the Hero of Mafeking, his reputation as an individual who defended his country was already well established by 1908. Institutions and interests outside of Scouting reinforced these ideas of heroism in their reporting of Scouting as well, further cementing the importance of patriotism to British boys.

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<sup>414</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: Original Edition*, pp. 212-222.

<sup>415</sup> Ibid, p. 275.

<sup>416</sup> Ibid, p. 278.

At the end of many sections in *Scouting for Boys*, Baden-Powell provided his young readers with a list of other books and publications he believed would further support his message. Baden-Powell presented tales of heroism to the boys as a way of linking deeds of Britain's great Empire buildings with the Scouting Movement. That boys often collected stories of other Scouts, regardless of personal connection, exemplifies Baden-Powell's goal to create a broad movement of civic-minded boys, linked together through a similar ideological and mythological past. These literary comparisons were crucial in the early days of Scouting. Baden-Powell not only grounded the Movement in his own national and civic ideology, but incorporated literature that supported his agenda. His multipronged approach could influence boys' Scouting experience that portrayed Baden-Powell as one of many voices that encouraged patriotic responsibility.

The heroism of individual Boy Scouts was recorded through multiple mediums, both within and outside of Scouting Headquarters. The media outlets that glorified his efforts and made him a celebrity to people of all ages in Britain also championed Scouting during the early days. Because Edwardian newspapers often reported Scout activities around communities, we can use these sources as a gauge for public representation. What is most significant to this examination, however, is that newspaper stories were often collected and displayed by troops and Scouts as part of their own records. Saved newspaper reports demonstrate that boys saved reports from Scout activities from all over the country, which linked him with the wider Scout community. Saved press reports also reflect what aspects of the Movement an individual found appealing and felt was most important to him. For example, a photo album from an anonymous Scout includes a newspaper clipping that stated a group of Sea Scouts were able to use their Scout training to rescue themselves after their boat capsized in the Thames.<sup>417</sup> Likewise, a boy from North London included a newspaper

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<sup>417</sup> *Album.*

clipping in their troop magazine that applauded a group of local Scouts who joined the military on the eve of the First World War.<sup>418</sup> Collecting newspaper articles on Scout activities not only served as markers of pride for the effected troops, but further reinforced that Scouting was a Movement propelled by these young Britons. These were boys connected in ideology of civic responsibility and patriotism that eventually became an organised institution. In these situations, Scout bravery was lauded by the newspapers and saved by Scouts from different parts of the country. The community of Scouting was linked not only by a uniform and standard of activities, but through ideas that encouraged bravery in civic and national service.

Official Scout records also highlighted individual heroism. Headquarters awarded bronze and silver crosses to boys who performed exceptional deeds in the field or public, which again emulated a military achievement structure. A young assistant scoutmaster from Doncaster named Reginald Harrison, for example, was awarded the silver medal on 17 June 1909 for “saving a woman from drowning in the River Don,” while Patrol Leader W. Wimpenny from the 1<sup>st</sup> North London Troop earned the Medal of Merit for “entering a burning building at the risk of his own life” and “stopping a runaway horse.”<sup>419</sup> Many other boys were praised for actions that included saving children from drowning, protecting women, stopping runaway carts or livestock, and assisting police. They represented Baden-Powell’s wish for Scouts to act as Britain’s paternalistic protectors, while upholding the law and civic responsibility: young knights of the Empire. These boys were not only honoured for their actions, but served as models for scouts and all boys across the country.

Hero worship in Scouting’s official levels reached its height with the First World War. Scouting and war is the focus of the next chapter, but it is necessary here to highlight how Scouts’ wartime deeds not only reflected general attitudes towards military involvement

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<sup>418</sup> 57<sup>th</sup>/52<sup>nd</sup> North London Troop, “Press Cuttings,” Scout Association Archives, no. 203 and *The Raven* (May 1909), p. 113.

<sup>419</sup> *Boy Scouts Roll of Honour*.

and the culture of militarism in general, but how it reinforced Scouting's fetishization of the individual hero. *The Scouts' Book of Heroes*, published in 1919 by Baden-Powell's long-time publishing partner C. Arthur Pearson with the introduction written by the Chief Scout himself, is a list of people whose actions during the war brought public recognition or 'honour' to their military unit. The book provides short biographical information on Scouts in the various military branches, those who served on the home front, and those who were killed, or as the book poetically writes, "called to higher service."<sup>420</sup> For example, soldier David Laidlaw, an assistant scoutmaster from the 1<sup>st</sup> Alnwick Troop was recognized for bravery as the first Boy Scout member to receive the Victoria Cross. During an 'over-the-top' charge, all soldiers except for Laidlaw sat frozen. The young Scout-soldier from Northumberland, however, "had two characteristics of the true Scout—a habit of prompt obedience and no thought of his personal safety."<sup>421</sup> This official record of Scouts' war-time prowess was directly attributed to the physical and character training the Movement offered boys during peacetime. As this thesis will demonstrate later on, many individual Scout-soldiers reinforced this idea in their own testimony by attributing their survival and victory to their childhood spent Scouting. These notable figures, however, served as a lesson to other Scouts and the public at large of how Scouting can turn average individual boys into heroes.

These stories of parades, public displays, and heroism that individual Scouts chose to collect and record described their broader understanding of citizenship. Teaching boys to be proper citizens was the Scouting Movement's primary objective. Not only did Baden-Powell formulate his ideas of citizenship in his texts and speeches, but he was reinforced by authors, social thinkers, and military and political figures. This thesis has outlined Baden-Powell's brand of citizenship in a previous chapter, while these stories demonstrate how boys at the ground level grappled with and displayed their understanding of what it meant to be a citizen

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<sup>420</sup> *The Scouts' Book of Heroes* (London: C. Arthur Pearson, LTD).

<sup>421</sup> *The Scouts' Book of Heroes*, p. 12.

in Edwardian Britain. Citizen training was at the centre of Scouting's mission to develop boys into dutiful national servants. Crucially, many of these boys linked Scouting with citizenship. Scouting was the mechanism through which they could achieve recognition from their superiors and from the public. It was during the First World War, however, that Scouting's merits were most tested. While the next chapter will look at Scouts who fought in the war itself, the following section will now focus on Scouting's wartime, domestic activities not directly related to combat.

### **Civic Defence**

Scouts engaged in civil activities that did not involve actual military combat, but aided the efforts of the nation. Scouts were often portrayed by newspapers as diplomats, as was the case with a *Daily Mail* article from 6 March 1909 that stated of a Scout troop's visit to Germany: "it is confidently anticipated that this visit will enhance among youths of both countries the friendly feelings and sentiments which have been so noticeable since the recent visit of the King and Queen."<sup>422</sup> Authors at the time as well imagined Scouts as soldiers or, in the example of Kim, boys who infiltrated enemy lines to foster British success. Roland Walker portrayed Scouts in his *Oscar Danby, V.C.* (1916) novel not only as actual combatants, but as patriotic defenders of the realm, writing that "never before had these lads felt such ringing pride and enthusiasm over that piece of coloured bunting...there was not a youth in the patrol who would not have given his life for that flag."<sup>423</sup> Troop and individual records, however, do not match up with this international aspect of Scouting portrayed by newspapers and authors.

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<sup>422</sup> *Daily Mail*, issue 4026 (6 March 1909), p. 3.

<sup>423</sup> Roland Walker, *Oscar Danby, V. C.: A Tale of the Great European War* (London: Partridge, 1916), p. 25.



While Scouts often participated in indirect national service on a daily basis, through abstract concepts of vigilance or by simply participating in Scouting games, the build up to the First World War and the war itself presented the boys with opportunities to test their commitment to Britain directly. Military service is perhaps the most obvious way in which a young man could show his patriotism. However, while many Scouts were too young to fight it did not mean Scouts did not actively participate in national defence. On 4 August 1914, a representative of Scout Headquarters by the name of W. H. Kendall sent a letter to the Chief Commissioner of the London Metropolitan Police, Sir Edward Ward, offering up the service of local scouts to be used in any manner the police saw fit:

I am directed by Sir Robert Baden-Powell, the Chief Scout, to forward to you copies of letters he has to-day sent to County Commissioners. Should you wish to avail yourself of the services of the Boy Scouts, Sir Robert Baden-Powell hopes you will not hesitate to ask for them. I enclose a booklet, in which you will find the names and addresses of the Commissioners mentioned above and it will save time if you will communicate with the direct.<sup>424</sup>

Likewise, a Scout leader by the name of Roland Philips, who although in his early twenties, was already a leading official with the districts of Finsbury, Shoreditch, Hackney, Bethnal Green, Stepney, and Poplar under his charge, told Police headquarters that 3,000 Scouts volunteered for police service in various districts around London, while 600 were already performing duties.<sup>425</sup> Describing many of them as “big strong fellows (aged 16-20) ready for any kind of work,” Philips assured Scotland Yard that the Scout volunteers would be a valuable asset to the police force.<sup>426</sup> His efforts exemplified the ways in which Scouts focused their energies at the local level, yet contributed to nationwide efforts. He suggested that the Scouts “could be arranged to work in patrols of six or eight boys under responsible leadership” to perform various tasks, including patrolling the streets.<sup>427</sup> While Philips was a

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<sup>424</sup> W. H. Kendall, “Untitled letter to Scout Headquarters,” Scout Association Archives, World War I, p.118.

<sup>425</sup> Roland Philips, “Untitled letter to Scout Headquarters,” Scout Association Archives, World War I, p. 118.

<sup>426</sup> Ibid.

<sup>427</sup> Ibid.

Scout official by this time, he was also a teenage founder of the Movement and was so dedicated to Scouting that he took up position in Headquarters before his death in the War. That 3,000 Scouts under his position volunteered for police service during the war suggests that the devotion to civic defence was not only evident in those who made careers out of Scouting, but for many young Britons active in the Movement. Civic duty may have been a somewhat abstract concept that allowed individuals to define the meaning for themselves, yet with the war upon them many Scouts defined their own understanding of nationhood through their national service.

Policing had the simultaneous role of serving both the civic arena and protecting the nation. During 1914 around 31,000 ‘special constables’ were sworn in to serve the Metropolitan Police during the “national emergency.”<sup>428</sup> Philips specifically maintained the division between the Boy Scouts and these special constables, stating that “it is no good their (Scouts) signing on as special police constables in the ordinary way as this would entail their being called away from their ordinary work in the day-time.”<sup>429</sup> Apart from undermining official stance against cadet training Headquarters maintained during the war that deputizing Scouts would potentially have, Philips’s consideration of the Scouts’ day jobs reinforced their role as active citizens, not professionals. The Scouts, therefore, functioned as backups to the police, not sworn officials. It was the role of every citizen, as they maintained, to support ones country to the best of his (or her) ability. For Philips and his boys, Scouting was paramount and reflected Baden-Powell’s wish for the Movement to act as support for many national endeavours. Furthermore, it also presented Scouting as something in which all British boys could participate for the good of the country. The experience of Scout John Daly from Weybridge as well demonstrates the connection between Scouting and national service. Daly acknowledged that his mother compelled him join in August of 1914 when he

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<sup>428</sup>Police Scout archive, SA, World War I, 188. and Metro Police online archive, <http://www.metpolicehistory.co.uk/1900-1945.html>.

<sup>429</sup> Philips, “Untitled letter to Scout Headquarters,” p. 118.

was eleven years old as part of his families' war effort.<sup>430</sup> From this, we can again see that Scouting attracted individuals who were already encouraged or engaged in public service. Scouting allowed boys to serve their local communities within a nation-wide movement of proactive youth.

The efforts of the 1<sup>st</sup> Wallington also demonstrate Scouts' contribution to the nation at the local level. A Scout recorded as E.G.N. recalled being on a camp in Sussex when he and his fellow Scouts learned war was declared. The camp was cut short in light of the news and he noted how on their way home, the railroads and other "vital points" were guarded by soldiers.<sup>431</sup> Upon returning home, he learned that not only did Baden-Powell issue "a mobilisation order to scouts troops," but the government as well asked the Movement for assistance.<sup>432</sup> His troop, and E.G.N. himself, followed suit of the soldiers they encountered on their journey home from camp and took on the responsibility of railroad guard. The Scout stated that "the very first thing that came our way was patrolling the railway lines and guarding railway bridges as it appeared that some of these might be the object of attack by enemy agents."<sup>433</sup> He noted the importance of the task by stating Germans might attack the lines given that British soldiers were largely transported by rail.<sup>434</sup> In essence, this Scout suggested that he not only contributed to national vigilance efforts, but directly protected soldiers travelling to France.

On one hand, E.G.N. placed a great amount of importance on his railroad guarding duties, yet suggested the practical application of his task was a bit more mundane in reality. He recalled that his most memorable experience on patrol was when he jumped off a raised ledge in the dark and "smashed both [his] knees."<sup>435</sup> He said of the incident: "this was

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<sup>430</sup> Daly, "From Boy to Bishop".

<sup>431</sup> E.G.N., "1<sup>st</sup> Wallington," 7, Scout Association Archives, TSA/GRO/COU/LON/2/1/A15/2.

<sup>432</sup> Ibid.

<sup>433</sup> Ibid.

<sup>434</sup> Ibid.

<sup>435</sup> Ibid.

probably a very good thing as otherwise I might have neglected my very necessary studies to continue bridge-guarding and apple collecting on the line to Croydon.”<sup>436</sup> This juxtaposition of images—the young steadfast sentry and the boy getting injured while playing—highlights the somewhat divergent representations of the Scouting experience in the boys’ records.

Many noted their dedication to service and the Movement, yet they were still teenagers who neglected their duties for fun. There appears to be a sarcastic tone in his statement, in that he suggested his time spent contributing to national security efforts mostly consisted of picking apples from nearby orchards. E.G.N. continued his recollection of service efforts in stating that once their railway protection job came to an end, his troop “did a tremendous job with less adventurous sounding things particularly message carrying (*sic*)” for “special service organisations and for the Red Cross.”<sup>437</sup> So we have testimony of a Scout’s national service efforts with a somewhat conflicting attribution of importance placed on his role. He at once stated the railroads needed protecting due to the number of active military personnel transported along the lines, yet he said his time was better spent on his studies given that he mostly picked apples while on duty. Furthermore, he does credit his troop’s duties in message delivery as a worthwhile and meaningful cause. In this testimony therefore, we can see this individual’s Scouting association as one of several different aspects of his life. He was able to contribute to national service, yet still focused on his personal development.

The distinction between civic duty and national defence was not often clear. Sometimes national defence was indirect, such as troops casually ‘patrolling’ the coastline for German ships during normal troop outings or boys recording instances in which they would tail a suspected ‘spy’ around town. Authors like Rowland Walker and John Finnemore appeared to encourage harassment of anybody who seemed out of place in an otherwise

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<sup>436</sup> Ibid.

<sup>437</sup> Ibid.

tranquil, English setting, while authors like P.G. Woodhouse mocked Scouting's xenophobic appearance. Such fictional portrayals demonstrated the social recognition of Scouting's brand of civic defence and national responsibility. The ideologies of Baden-Powell and other like-minded nationalists of the Edwardian period is well documented, however, what these young Scouts show is the imperial service being carried out by these boys. The Boy Scouts did not only reflect an overall social trend of nationalism before the First World War, but honed those values into a massive youth movement. Scouting was both the driver and the mechanism for youth genuinely committed to the causes of the nation.

There was much fiction dedicated to such activities during the lead up to 1914, much of which was available to middle-class boys. Scouting presented an opportunity for boys to live out the fantasies formed by a childhood's worth of adventure literature as a way to gain inclusion in society, as argued by Björn Sundmark.<sup>438</sup> The voices of the boys themselves demonstrate that the First World War offered these youth the chance to take Scouting's central tenets of duty, patriotism, and protection and enact them in a real-world setting. Citizenship was not merely an idea to Baden-Powell and the Scouting Movement, but a concept that must be put into action. During the build up to the First World War and through the war itself, many Scouts, at the encouragement of Headquarters and local leaders, took civil defence upon themselves. A young Sea Scout named A. Clayton left a detailed account of his coast watching exploits. In August of 1915, Clayton and several of his fellow Scouts left their homes "for the great adventure" of watching for German ships in Hope Cove (southeast of Plymouth).<sup>439</sup> Much of Clayton's diary details the daily activities of coast watching. He talked about when he or his fellow Scouts went to town for supplies, what time they woke up, and the duties they performed. What is most crucial in his diary, however, is the language he used, which mirrored the mood encouraged by Headquarters. Baden-Powell

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<sup>438</sup> Sundmark, "Citizenship and Children's Identity," pp. 109-119.

<sup>439</sup> Clayton, *Hope Cove Sea Scouts*, 16 Aug 1915.

talked about Sea Scouts with a sense of professionalism, linking them directly with the war effort. In his wartime publication, *The Young Knights of Empire*, a book that served as a list of scouts' activities, a companion recruitment book to *Scouting for Boys*, and propaganda for the importance of Scouting, Baden-Powell wrote:

Thanks to so large a number of Scouts having taken up the training as Sea Scouts we were able to supply about 1400 useful and efficient fellows to act as Coastguards directly the war broke out (*sic*). This enabled a large number of the regular Coastguards to be sent to man the Fleet. Since then, the Admiralty have been so satisfied with the good work done by the Sea Scouts, who have been guarding our coasts from the extreme north of Scotland down to the Land's End in Cornwall, that they have asked for more of them, and we now have about 2000 employed on this duty and as signallers on board mine-sweepers, coaling and supply ships. The Sea Scouts have won for themselves a very good name by Being Prepared before war broke out.<sup>440</sup>

Here, Baden-Powell placed the Scouts within the larger contingency of British servicemen. Scouts were not simply children, tagging along in a casual manner, but actively contributing to the war effort in a serious and effective fashion. The young Scouts replaced the adults who went to fight in the war. Baden-Powell often declared his Scouts to be heirs to the legacy of Britain's great historical heroes. This text not only suggests that the boys took up the work of men while they fought for their country, but indeed manned the posts until their time came to pick up a rifle. A Boy Scout's duty did not stop with coast watching, but served as one Scouting activity that could prepare him for military service. While this is the image Scout Headquarters intended to convey, the important question is if the Scouts viewed themselves in the same light. It is impossible to know the exact thoughts of the thousands of boys who participated in coast watching, but some records do survive. Of the Scout diaries that remain, there is evidence to suggest that these boys did indeed view themselves in the same lights in which they were portrayed by Baden-Powell, further demonstrating that the ideological

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<sup>440</sup> Baden-Powell, *Young Knights*, p. 125.

divide between Headquarters and local Scouts was not always as distant as some historians of Scouting have previously argued.<sup>441</sup>

Baden-Powell's characterization of Scouts as knights in service of their Empire was reflected in the wartime activities of Scout Clayton. Clayton's coast watching experience was not a holiday, nor a Scouting game at camp, but a legitimate post that was taken very seriously by the participating boys. He recalled that a man named Mr. Kelly acted as his and his fellow Scouts' "S.O." during their stint and awoke them every morning in the same manner as sailors "in the navy do by shouting 'Heave-out-i, Heave-out-i, Shake a leg, Shake a leg there' at 6 o'clock Greenwich time."<sup>442</sup> The diary is largely a record of his tasks and jobs intertwined with descriptions of people he worked with, downtime activities, and the rare expression of emotion or critical comment that demonstrate the Scouting ethos in his actions. For example, he commented that he "got a bit fed up with 'Sam' and 'Fat' who behaved like pigs."<sup>443</sup> This remark appears out of place in the text between two explanations of his daily duties, as if his fellow Scouts annoyed him at the very moment he wrote the sentence. This judgement on the slovenly behaviour of his comrades also indicative of Scouting's tenets of health and character discussed in the previous chapter. Clayton's annoyance also suggests that a Scout eager enough to participate in coast watching and maintain a detailed account of his Scouting experience would express the shared Scout emphasis on many other Scouting principles. Aside from reporting two enemy submarines that the deployed naval destroyers discovered to be small sail boats, the Scouts did not see much action. Clayton, however, recorded that they did make themselves useful by helping fishermen along the coast bring in their daily catch. Reflecting Baden-Powell's lesson to 'do a good turn,' the boys donated

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<sup>441</sup> As argued in the introductory chapter, assertions from historians like Sam Pryke, who stated "Scouts were (and still are) an organisation that appealed to boys because they did fun and interesting activities within it" overlooks the earliest troop founders who did share in Baden-Powell's ideology and basic vision (Pryke, "The Control of Sexuality," p. 16).

<sup>442</sup> Clayton, *Hope Cove Sea Scouts*, 17 Aug 1915. The exact meaning of "S.O." is unclear, however, it most likely the initials for either senior officer or security officer.

<sup>443</sup> Clayton, *Hope Cove Sea Scouts*, 25 Aug 1915.

their payment of a bucket of mackerel to the wives and families of the coastguards away at war.<sup>444</sup>

Aside from the occasional reference to storms or boating mishaps, overall Clayton's diary appears uneventful. As is the case with many soldier day-to-day accounts, the diary's mundane nature reveals this Scout's and his comrade's experience with civic defence. While Clayton would have read the heroic experiences in *Scouting for Boys* and might have grown up, as many of his contemporaries had, with adventure literature, his experience with serving the nation was not the "great adventure" he predicted it would be.<sup>445</sup> Rather, passages from his journal often read as follows: "Mon 30<sup>th</sup> Oct: Nothing much doing to-day. I was on telephone duty in afternoon. The weather still wet and rough" and "Friday Aug 18<sup>th</sup>: I had the job of washing up the socks, not a nice job but somebody has to do it."<sup>446</sup> Such passages indicate the tedious nature of his service, while highlighting Baden-Powell's reminder to 'be a brick' even if it is in the low corner of the wall and Scout Law number 8: A Scout Smiles and Whistles under all circumstances" and "when he gets an order he should obey it cheerily and readily."<sup>447</sup> Nationhood to Clayton meant doing the job to which he was assigned.

Coast Watching, as it was reflected in the Coast Watchman Badge, was not only a merit available to Scouts, but an activity that allowed boys to directly participate in national defence during the First World War before they became old enough for direct military action. Throughout the war, almost 25,000 Scouts participated in coast watching duties, demonstrating how significant their presence was in communities and lines of war service.<sup>448</sup> Scouts were often under the supervision of Coast Guard personnel, but acted under the command of their local leadership. However, as the diary of Patrol Leader Clayton shows, they often worked autonomously and without the direct supervision from an adult authority:

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<sup>444</sup> Clayton, *Hope Cove Sea Scouts*, 14 Sept 1915.

<sup>445</sup> Clayton, *Hope Cove Sea Scouts*, 16 August 1915.

<sup>446</sup> Clayton, *Hope Cove Sea Scouts*, 30 October 1915.

<sup>447</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: Original 1908 Edition*, p. 46.

<sup>448</sup> Proctor, *On my Honor*, p. 87.



he recorded that he manned the phones, stood lookout, and ran errands in the community.<sup>449</sup> Likewise, the Scout Association Archives notes that coast watching “was a very practical example of one of Scouting’s core practices, giving boys independence.”<sup>450</sup> Coast watching Scouts were entrusted with responsibilities over the threats of German attacks, as well as the more practical aspects of drownings, weather condition alerts, and shipwrecks, making them direct agents in national safety. While they were separated through uniform and position from military personnel, youth were increasingly utilised in war service along with women and men past combat age during the war.<sup>451</sup> Baden-Powell noted that not only were Sea Scouts able to take up duties on the coast, which allowed men to fight on the front, but that they performed so well the Admiralty requested more Scouts to act as “signallers on board mine-sweepers, coaling and supply ships.”<sup>452</sup> Their youth did not negate any responsibility, nor were they viewed by Scout Headquarters as anything other than crucial participants in the war.

## Conclusion

Scouting allowed boys access to spaces usually reserved for men, and gave them the opportunity to express their patriotism and contribute to the nation in a legitimate way. Demonstrating Scouting’s legitimacy to the public occupied the minds and efforts of many Scouts and was a crucial process of cementing the Movement’s position in the public. It was not only Baden-Powell and his adult colleagues who promoted Scouting, but the young boys and men across the country who adopted and appropriated nationalist ideas and images to

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<sup>449</sup> Clayton, *Hope Cove Sea Scouts*.

<sup>450</sup> “Guarding the Shores,” Scout Association Archives, last accessed 2 November 2015, <http://www.scoutsrecords.org/explore.php?dil=&icerik=114&bparent=17935FB4F8D8A0A79DBE50F1F25CD BC2&>.

<sup>451</sup> Proctor, *Civilians in a World War*, pp. 67-73.

<sup>452</sup> Baden-Powell, *Young Knights of the Empire*, p. 125.

link their association with the wider imperial culture of Edwardian Britain. They were agents in their own personal development, as well as critical driving factors in the success of the Movement at large.

This chapter has examined aspects of nationhood in the writings and records of the enthusiastic members of the Scouting Movement and demonstrated that while patriotism was at the core of the Boy Scouts and even many of its founding members' personal ideology, Baden-Powell's lessons on civic service and broader imperial imagery was also reflected in the boys' Scouting experience. Looking at the Scouting Movement as a way to explore greater issues of nationalism and myth narratives, we can see many the patriotic themes that appeared throughout Britain's imperial culture (i.e. literature and public demonstrations) during the late Victorian and Edwardian period appeared in these boys' activities. The Movement was a way for boys to practice their beliefs, making Scouting a product of an overall nationalistic trend seen in Britain during this time.

Examining the written and collected records of the Movement's individual members highlights the crucial role individuals played in supporting and contributing to imperial efforts and national imaginations. As this chapter demonstrated, these Scouts viewed themselves and their associations within a wider world, greater than their own local origins. They were part of the Scouting Movement, an international brotherhood that promoted values bigger than the individual and the single community, yet their specific activities targeted local issues. Most importantly, however, this community of Scouting was formulated through images of war and national superiority. Smith-Rosenberg states that "for a nation to live, its heterogeneous, often contentious, inhabitants much experience themselves as integral parts of a collective...rhetoric, images, and words lie at the heart of the daily practices that create that collective national identity."<sup>453</sup> While a Scout community certainly existed along the

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<sup>453</sup> Smith-Rosenberg, *Violent Empire*, p. 18.

Andersonian model Smith-Rosenberg describes—boys who never met one another were connected through Baden-Powell's texts and moral teachings—the imagined community of nationhood enveloped their experience and was indeed at the heart of the Scouting Movement. From the beginning, Scouting was used to promote British values in Britain, and the values of each nation in which the Boy Scouts took hold. While these boys associated themselves as Scouts, the Movement was used as a tool through which they could express their patriotism and serve their country along existing nationalist lines.

As organisations, political movements, and philanthropic endeavours all sought to improve and incorporate youth, boys books and magazines, as demonstrated by Peter Hugill, were a crucial element in “spreading the doctrine of imperialism and, by extension, manliness to the newly literate classes from which the administrative and military cadres of the Empire had to be drawn.”<sup>454</sup> The simple act of reading allowed youth to directly engage with a whole series of ideas and emotions on their own terms, albeit guided by the author. Edwardian boys digested by the millions books and magazines that were aimed at a youth audience, resulting in a youth culture saturated with adventure fiction and nationalist imagery.<sup>455</sup> Baden-Powell understood the power literature had in society and, more importantly, knew that the type of material to which boys were subjected could influence their outlooks on life. His creation of *The Scout* with long time publishing partner Arthur Pearson, which sought to supplement boys' Scouting experience with wholesome and educational readings, mirrored magazines like *Boys' Own Paper* in style and combined what he perceived to be qualities necessary for citizenship with Scouting. While adventure stories, imperial narratives, and historical biographies were incorporated into Scout curriculum, they often followed the exploits of adults. Baden-Powell and others believed that stories involving other youth would benefit boys much more. The first edition of *Scouting for Boys* as well opens with a commentary on

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<sup>454</sup> Peter J. Hugill, “Imperialism and Manliness in Edwardian Boys' Novels,” *Ecumene*, 6 (April 1999), p. 319.

<sup>455</sup> See Dunae, “Boys' Literature and the Idea of Empire.”

Kipling's *Kim*. After summarising aspects of the novel, Baden-Powell addressed his readers saying "these and other adventures of Kim are well worth reading, because they show what valuable work a boy scout could do for his country if he were sufficiently trained and sufficiently intelligent."<sup>456</sup> Baden-Powell blurred the real world with the fictional with Scouting, which surely not only added to the fun of the Movement, but turned many boys onto Scouting.

Likewise, Baden-Powell's own image mirrored those found in adventure literature. He upheld the same virtues exhibited by most 'imperial heroes' of the time: duty, steadfastness, resolve, and masculinity. Baden-Powell as well seemed to fully embrace his image as imperial figure. Using characters and literature as archetypal figure on which to base his Scouts, Baden-Powell positioned imperial heroes as subjects of aspiration. In a correspondence with Rudyard Kipling, Baden-Powell wrote the imperial poet saying "You were kind enough to give me leave...to quote your story *Kim* in giving the boys a lead in becoming Boy Scouts. We are now encouraging a junior branch of the movement under the name of Wolf Cubs for youngsters between 8 and 11 and I want to enthuse them through your Mowgli and his animal friends of *The Jungle Book*."<sup>457</sup> Likewise, the boys' emphasis on heroism demonstrated above was also a reflection of their appropriation for Baden-Powell's own heroic image. *Scouting for Boys* and other Scout reading material reinforced broader imperial images that further provided boys with tales of youth heroism.

Clayton, Fisher, Mason, and the other Scouts and troops highlighted in this chapter were examples of many young Britons who contributed to their nation. While Tammy Proctor notes that the First World War presented civilians, and especially children

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<sup>456</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys, Original 1908 Edition*, p. 18. It is worth noting as well, the lack of capitalisation in Baden-Powell's use of "boy scout." As this was written as a call-to-action, before the Movement was institutionalised, "boy scout" was not a proper noun. It is nevertheless an important distinction given Baden-Powell's assertion that all boys should make themselves useful and incorporate national service into their daily lives: being a 'scout' embodied this responsibility.

<sup>457</sup> Baden-Powell, "Letter to Rudyard Kipling."

opportunities for significant non-combatant national contribution for the first time, I argue that the experience of these Scouts demonstrated an organised and ideologically sympathetic body of young people training and preparing to assist their nation before the war started.<sup>458</sup> Furthermore, it was these boys who developed Scouting as a movement dedicated to national service and reinforced patriotism in their troops and communities. Children and young people replaced labourers who either volunteered or were conscripted to fight during the war. The Boy Scouts by 1914 actively engaged its members with civil defence activities, yet the process began before violence erupted in Europe. The Movement was founded and promoted by boys who shared Baden-Powell's vision of a country whose youth would be ready to serve and do their part if the need should so arise. Marching and public displays of nationhood, tied in with Scouting, manifested the efforts of Baden-Powell and moralistic youth publications to instil patriotism and civic duty in young readers, while awards and roles of honour praised boys for their efforts of performing heroic deeds and answering Baden-Powell's call to serve as knights of the Empire. These boys' testimonies as the developers of the Movement and to the socially recognised build-up to the First World War demonstrate an active participation in the process of national defence and contribution to the imperial culture of Edwardian Britain.

These stories found in the Scouts' records reflect a culmination that can be traced to Scouting's origins before the war. In encouraging boys to become young knights of the Empire, using poems like "Charge of the Light Brigade" for inspiration, these Scout soldier's stories are self-fulfilling. Headquarter's official narrative maintained that Scouting did not promote militarism, but rather prepared boys for success and survival if the need should so arise. If it did, they would demonstrate a greater skill in wartime situations due to their Scout training. Publications such as these made sure their members' actions were recognized, while

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<sup>458</sup> See Proctor, *Civilians in a World War*.

citing Scouting as the reason for their heroism. Boy Scout troops throughout the country reflected this hero praise, while reinforcing Baden-Powell's characteristics of what constituted heroism. Local troops often had their own system of merit for members, while individuals could collect merit badges to symbolise their own actions.

Scrapbooks and other Scouting material that appropriated images from *Chums*, Kipling, and performances reflected broader imperial culture of Edwardian Britain and demonstrate how these boys constructed their worldview through their Scout association. Baden-Powell's lessons on citizenship, using great figures of the past to illustrate his points on heroism, and encouraging civic responsibility in police assistance, Sea Scouting, and coast watching was designed for one purpose: to prepare Britain's youth. While citizenship was a positive outcome in its own right for Baden-Powell, the ultimate test of manhood and patriotism was participation for war. As individual Scouts took it upon themselves to organise troops, train members under Baden-Powell's guidelines, and spread Scouting around the country, so too must we recognize the individual involvement of local Scout leaders in the First World War. Indeed, as the next chapter will demonstrate, many boys used Scouting as preliminary military training and as a wartime contribution to their nation. It is important, therefore, to keep linked these ideas of nationhood and citizen training, and Boy Scout involvement in the First World War.

## **Chapter VI. Scouts at War: Militarism, Training, and Memory**

This chapter will analyse the experience of individual Scouts and troops during the First World War, while placing their recorded testimony up against the wider discourse of Scout militarism and citizen and youth agency surrounding issues of war. As the nature of the militaristic tendencies of the Movement have been a contested and controversial aspect of Scouting history, it is crucial to place members' experience and rationale for joining in the discourse. The chapter will further demonstrate that individual boys and troop leaders developed military training practices and encouraged their troops to participate in national defence through their own enterprise. Baden-Powell laid the blueprint for Scouting, yet it was these enthusiastic members who participated in the Movement and propelled it into something much more impactful and ideologically significant than simple outdoors fun. The wartime experiences of the Scout soldiers and their militaristic activities and attitudes before the war further highlight what this thesis has argued about youth agency and the Scouting Movement: these boys emulated and appropriated broader concepts of imperial and national culture from texts and social leaders, while using such images and ideas as guides to shape their own understanding of the wider world and construct their own corners of the Movement.

This chapter will be divided into four main sections. First, I will analyse the contemporary Edwardian debate about the militaristic nature of the Scouting Movement and will place the boys' experience into the broader literature. Second, this chapter will look at the historiographical debate surrounding the reasons why boys joined the Movement and infuse the narrative with personal accounts from the boys themselves. Third, this chapter will examine troop activities in which boys participated that contributed to direct military training

or evoked militaristic imagery. Finally, I will analyse how Scouts and former Scouts recalled their experience in the war and how they linked their Scout training or participation with their military service. Scouting was an ‘imagined community’ of like-minded boys, who were influenced by similar texts and socially developed in largely similar backgrounds. These boys advanced a scheme proposed by Baden-Powell into a movement, which quickly turned into an organisation. The First World War serves as a culmination of the Boy Scouts as a movement and as another harsh example that the Victorian mentality of ‘playing the game,’ this time manifested through the Boy Scouts, had brutal results in the face of modern warfare.

### **Militarism and the Scouting Movement**

Manchester Scout Alexander Fisher wrote that from when he was a child his father read stories of military heroes and imperial adventure tales. He stated that “At the close of the South African War, I witnessed a striking procession of soldiers marching through the village on their homeward journey.”<sup>459</sup> While he wrote this testimony on a military base in Wales, waiting for deployment to France in 1915, he stated of his childhood experience: “I at once made up my mind to be a soldier myself someday.”<sup>460</sup> Fisher, like many other Scouts and troops highlighted in this chapter not only brought militaristic ideas into the Scouting Movement, but actually established military training regimes and curriculums to prepare for combat and survival situations.

Accusations of militarism plagued the Scouting Movement from the outset and throughout the twentieth century. Likewise, opposition from contemporary socialist thinkers argued that Scouting promoted nationalism and military service in boys. Celia Rosatstein, an American socialist activist, argued that “boys are asked to join the Army. Of course the

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<sup>459</sup> Fisher, *My Life*, p. 6.

<sup>460</sup> Ibid.



capitalist doe (*sic*) not call it the Army. They claim that these boys are not being gathered to be trained for future soldiers but rather to be taught to become *gentlemen*.”<sup>461</sup> Keir Hardie as well voiced his concerns over the militarism he saw in Scouting. The Labour leader is reported to have said at a 1910 public speaking occasion that “the territorials and the boy scouts...are part of a general movement to familiarize the public with the soldier as the important man in the state. I feel no hostility towards the individual soldier, but militarism always means a curtailment of civil liberty.”<sup>462</sup> George Orwell commented in the 1930s about the opposition of left-wing groups to the Scouting Movement into the years just after the First World War. He recalled a tract which stated a boy could not be a Scout and a communist because a “Boy Scout must salute the Union Jack, which is the symbol of tyranny and oppression.”<sup>463</sup> These accusations, while they ignore the experience and feelings of the individuals in the Movement just as Kitchener did, demonstrate the criticism and accusations Scouting received with regards to militarism throughout the first-half of the twentieth century. While these criticisms were both rooted in broad ideological opposition and appeared alongside popularised images of the conformist young national promoted by early critics and Scout Headquarters alike, the Scouts’ records not only show active military training occurred, but that boys also disputed accusations of militarism and justified training out of defence.

Scout records indicate that there was an awareness of not only militaristic elements in Scouting, but of the debate and criticism surrounding it. It was not uncommon for Baden-Powell to respond to his critics and defend the Movement, as I will show shortly. However looking at an article written by one boy from Clapham will demonstrate that, as was the case

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<sup>461</sup> Celia Rosatstein, “Why Boys Should Not Join the ‘Boy Scouts,’” *The Young Socialists’ Magazine* [New York], 41. 6 (June 1911), p. 12, *Archvies.org*.

<sup>462</sup> *The Pittsburgh Press* (1 July 1910), p. 7.

<sup>463</sup> George Orwell, “Boys’ Weeklies (1940),” *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell: Volume I, In an Age like this, 1920-1940*, ed. by Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (London: Secker & Warburg, 1968), pp. 460-485. The issue of communism and Scouting will be addressed in the concluding chapter alongside resistance and expansion.

with physical Scouting activities, the boys themselves took an active role in the ideological framework of the Movement. Marcus Mason, a Scout from 1<sup>st</sup> Clapham Raven Patrol, dismissed criticism from Hardie in writing “Pooh! Pooh! Says some high spirited individual of the Socialistic class such as Keir Hardie. His advice is to resort to no army training; it teaches youths to think of nothing but fighting.”<sup>464</sup> This is a direct response from a local Scout towards a public figure and an example of a young leader acting as political guide for the Scouts under his charge. He wrote in his troop’s community magazine, indicating the possibility of a dialogue concerning the militarism issue among his friends and Scouts. Mason continued his attack on Hardie by insisting that “such ridiculous nonsense as this may well be pooh-poohed by the intelligent individual and I am glad to see there are at least some men who realise the necessity of encouraging patriotism.”<sup>465</sup> As Mason was either seventeen or eighteen years old at the time he wrote this and not an adult member of the Scouting authority, it offers a glimpse at the ways in which boys disseminated their own ideas and opinions about what the Movement should provide its members in the way of training and values. The young Scout finished his sentiments by emulating Baden-Powell directly in writing “we don’t want war, but we will jolly well ‘Be Prepared’ for it if it does come.”<sup>466</sup> This boy was a direct participant in the political discourse circulating around Edwardian Britain and tied his personal Scout identity within a broader ideological framework. Mason, like many others, as this chapter will show, took it upon himself to instil in his Scouts a sense of responsibility in military training.

It is important to view the issue of Scouting and militarism within the wider context of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Europe in order to understand Baden-Powell’s and Scouting’s relationship with militarism and military training. Baden-Powell denied Scouting was a militaristic movement and organisation. He viewed militarism as a negative

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<sup>464</sup> Mason, *The Raven*, 5.2 (May 1909), p. 100.

<sup>465</sup> Ibid.

<sup>466</sup> Ibid.

aspect of continental state authority which incorporated conscription and disregarded individual soldiers' wellbeing.<sup>467</sup> Baden-Powell wrote in 1914 that he once had a small argument with the German Emperor about British and German military formations. He claimed that Wilhelm II "objected to the system in our [British] training which teaches the men to spread out and to take cover in advancing to the attack."<sup>468</sup> According to Baden-Powell's account, the Prussian ruler said "you teach them [soldiers] to be afraid of the bullets before they have even heard one. In the German Army we march the men by rank after rank of their fellows; they cannot fail to carry the position."<sup>469</sup> Baden-Powell viewed this attitude towards the lives of soldiers as wasteful and "ruthless."<sup>470</sup> The Chief Scout's position on militarism therefore is linked with his conscious and unconscious Anglocentrism. Baden-Powell and the young Marcus Mason's position towards militarism is exemplified in Matthew Johnson's observation that Edwardians were reluctant to define their association within a 'militaristic' context.<sup>471</sup> As Baden-Powell associated the concept of militarism with brutality and 'Prussianism,' he denied such accusations labelled against his Scouting Movement and British society in general. Mason's writings on the matter demonstrated that the contention over the militaristic nature of Scouting was not only debated among adult elites, but addressed on the ground throughout local, Scout circles.

Baden-Powell often addressed his critics in writing and in public speeches. In *Scouting for Boys*, under the section entitled "Militarism," Baden-Powell wrote:

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<sup>467</sup> For research on the distinctions between British and continental militarism see Anne Summers, "Militarism in Britain before the Great War," *History Workshop*, 2 (Autumn, 1976); A. J. A. Morris, *The Starmongers: The Advocacy for War and Rearmament, 1896-1914* (London: Routledge, 1984); Paris, *Warrior Nation* (2000); Pearce, *Comrades in Conscience* (2001); George Q. Flynn, *Conscription and Democracy: the draft France, Great Britain, and the United States* (London: Greenwood Press, 2002); Kevin Morgan, "Militarism and Anti-Militarism: Socialists Communists, and Conscription in France and Britain, 1900-1940," *Past and Present*, 202.1 (February 2009), pp. 207-244; and Matthew Johnson, *Militarism and the British Left, 1902-1914* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013).

<sup>468</sup> Baden-Powell, *Quick Training for War: A Few Practical Suggestions Illustrated by Diagrams* (London: Conway, 2014), p 30.

<sup>469</sup> Wilhelm II, *Quick Training*, by Baden-Powell, p. 30.

<sup>470</sup> Baden-Powell, *Quick Training*, pp. 30-31.

<sup>471</sup> Matthew Johnson, "Militarism in Britain?: The Boy Scouts and the War Office before the Great War, *Books for Boys: Literacy, Nation and the First World War* (Durham, UK: The Institute of Advanced Study, 2014), p. 19.

Two or three prominent authorities have written deprecating my attempt to ‘foster among the boys of Britain a bloodthirsty and warlike spirit.’ I can only fear that either these gentlemen have not read the handbooks carefully, or that I have expressed myself very badly. The whole intention of the Boy Scouts’ training is for peaceful citizenship. Even if I had advocated training the lads in a military way (which I have not done), I am impenitent enough to see no harm in it. I have not noticed that ex-soldiers are more inclined than other people to commit murders; all that I see in them, as a rule, is that they have been taught self-discipline, to sacrifice themselves, if need be, for others, to obey orders, to be sober, clean, and active, to make the best of things as they find them, to be loyal to themselves and their officers. All of which appear to men to be valuable assets in character for a citizen, whatever many be his grade or trade.<sup>472</sup>

The debate over the militaristic nature of Scouting stems from an inherent difference in definition between Scouting supporters and critics. The Movement was yet another case in which political parties and ideologies clashed. Robert MacDonald notes that to “Tory imperialists it [Scouting] was a patriotic enterprise, a chance to prepare youth for the war that was coming; to many Liberals and Radicals it was a symptom of the mentality that was making war certain.”<sup>473</sup> Scouting served as a focal point of broader conflict over national and imperial issues. The lack of attention to the individuals at the ground level and how they interacted with militarism is why an examination focusing on the witnesses to the Movement is necessary. The voices of the boys themselves, however, rarely appeared in the debate. Yet preparing boys for the possibility of war was something that Baden-Powell, reflected in the writings of Patrol Leader Mason, encouraged in Scouting curriculum.

The activities of a troop in the early years of the Movement exemplified efforts to provide boys with military preparation. In August of 1909 the boys of the 57<sup>th</sup> North London 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Crouch End Troop had a summer camp at Old Hunstanton, “a small out-of-the-world village on the Norfolk coast.”<sup>474</sup> The Scouts engaged in the typical camp activities of camp setting, fire building, and cooking, but as this camp was “run on quite military lines,” the boys also built bivouacs, trenches, bridges, and performed other activities “in which a

<sup>472</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: Original 1908 Edition*, p. 300.

<sup>473</sup> MacDonald, *Sons of the Empire*, p. 179.

<sup>474</sup> 57<sup>th</sup> North London Troop: *Baden-Powell Boy Scouts*.

solider must be proficient when on active service.”<sup>475</sup> This summary of troop endeavours from 1908-1910, recorded in a homemade troop booklet, claimed the boys “returned to Head-Quarters [local troop meeting location] with very pleasant memories of an instructive and happy time.”<sup>476</sup> Although this camp took place during peacetime, their days at camp were nevertheless filled with military-style training, with the entire camp centred on a martial spirit. The author of this account blurred the lines between militarism and war training with fun and recreation, while the camp reflects the atmosphere of anxiety and preparation Baden-Powell instilled into the Movement. The military was not written about as something to be avoided, but rather as an inherent part of these boys’ Scouting experience. Furthermore, there is no comment on ‘militarism’ as an ideological concept in this source, only a statement that the camp was structured on a military style. This troop experience highlights that military training was incorporated into Scouting as one of many aspects of citizen training. As one should be thrifty, clean, and industrious, he should also know how to properly defend his nation during times of war.

What this account says about Scouting’s military leanings, therefore, is that individual troops used the time devoted to cultivating citizenship to train for war. As we saw in chapter four, a troop’s “Assault-at-Arms” programme shows how a troop incorporated martial activities into many aspects of Scout life. Events like “Bayonet Drill” and “Sword-Play,” suggest this troop cultivated its image around their militaristic skill.<sup>477</sup> In presenting soldierly displays as part of their public face, the 52<sup>nd</sup> North London troop not only reflected the martial spirit of the time, but demonstrated their proficiency with combat exercises.

Likewise, the military-style public demonstrations of the 1<sup>st</sup> Stoke Newington serve as an example of Scouting’s militaristic image at the local level. The 1909 programme refers to the boys as a company, rather than troop, which may indicate it was a connected with a group

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<sup>475</sup> Ibid.

<sup>476</sup> Ibid.

<sup>477</sup> 52<sup>nd</sup> N. London Troop, “Assult-at-Arms.”

such as the Boys' Brigade, but it is difficult to say for certain. The event was comprised of explicitly military-based activities such as marching demonstrations and rifle drills, as well as more subtle displays like physical drills, which we can see again linked physical health and national defence in the Scouting experience of these boys.<sup>478</sup> These direct and indirect military activities were performed and supervised by people designated with military titles. The marching drill was ran by Lieutenant Kitto, while the First-Aid demonstration was presented by Colour Sergeant Ward. The rank designations of these Scouts as well highlights the image the military themes 1<sup>st</sup> Stoke Newington boys incorporated into their Scouting experience and the image they wished to portray in their local community. Given such activities at the local level, it is clear that early critics of the Movement did not only respond to Baden-Powell and his adult supporters, but to the efforts of the boys themselves.

Such examples highlight how broader imperial and nationalist sentiments functioned in the lived experience of the Scouting Movement, and how Scout Headquarters, broader imperial culture, and the boys themselves all bolstered and influenced one another. Scouting was in part the result of a trend of patriotism and national service, but also helped reinforce the martial spirit in its activities.

The above account of the 57<sup>th</sup> North London boys' activities exemplifies disconnect between Baden-Powell's claims that Scouting opposed militarism and those who accused the Movement of training teenagers and boys for military service. Despite the Movement's seemingly apparent militaristic tone, Baden-Powell maintained the Movement did not encourage war or militarism, but prepared for it in case the need arose. Baden-Powell believed in the benevolence of Britain, asserting that if war did occur, Britain would be the

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<sup>478</sup> "1<sup>st</sup> Stoke Newington Company of Boy Scouts: Programme of Display" (21 July 1909), Scout Association Archives, TSA/GRO/COU/LON/7/1/PUB/1.

defender, not the aggressor.<sup>479</sup> He conveyed this mentality in a variety of ways to the Scouts. In *Scouting for Boys*, he wrote that “you know at school how if a swaggering ass comes along and threatens to bully you, he only does so because he thinks you will give in to him; but if you know how to box and square up to him he alters his tone and takes himself off.”<sup>480</sup> Baden-Powell continued to place matters of state and international diplomacy in familiar terms to the boys by writing “it is just the same with nations.”<sup>481</sup> The Chief Scout’s position as well as Patrol Leader Mason’s message concerning Keir Hardie is evocative of a Victorian mentality towards war, expressed in “MacDermott’s War Song”—“we don’t want to fight but by jingo if we do,/ we’ve got the ships, we’ve got the men, we’ve got the money too”—and draws on an existing assumption of Britain’s noble imperial mission.<sup>482</sup>

There are two crucial points here. The first is that Baden-Powell understood training for war as a defensive, necessary way to dissuade others, with dishonourable intentions, from attacking Britain.<sup>483</sup> Second, such a sanitized and disingenuous depiction of war disguised the violence and contributed to the ways in which Scouting events treated battle as a game. Reducing the concept of military aggression to a metaphor of a schoolyard bully suggests a conflict between good and evil, nullifying responsibility for the actions of the supposed ‘good’ side, and implies a swift and decisive blow could end a conflict. Likewise, despite Scouts’ agency and proactive involvement in their communities, Baden-Powell’s audience were still children and adolescents who may not have fully grasped the brutality of war; remember from the previous chapter the young Scout sneaking off to steal apples when he should have been guarding the rail stations. Nobody died in Baden-Powell’s metaphor. Nor

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<sup>479</sup> It should be clarified here that Baden-Powell meant defensive war with a European power. While wars waged consistently in Africa and Asia, the Chief Scout not view wars with ‘colonial’ peoples in the same way he did with a European or more technologically superior force.

<sup>480</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: Original 1908 Edition*, p. 277.

<sup>481</sup> Ibid.

<sup>482</sup> G. W. Hunt, “MacDermott’s War Song (1877),” *Victorianweb.org*.

<sup>483</sup> The anxiety felt by Baden-Powell and other British observers is also present in this sentiment. Regardless of the fact that Britain was a dominant nation, it was still depicted as the smaller, more vulnerable figure in the scenario. Only through resolve and training could Britain succeed against the larger, emerging nations.

was anybody dismembered, gassed, or mentally traumatised. Unfortunately, many boys featured in throughout the thesis were, as the latter section of this chapter will highlight.

The writings of W.J. Dane, a Scout from Clapham reflected an imagined battle. A 1908 patrol journal, written and edited by the young Scouts themselves, displayed a song the boys sang simply entitled “A Patrol Song” that mirrored literary themes and Baden-Powell’s lessons of stealth and using nature to their tactical advantage:

For the innocent knee-high grass,  
 For the ditch that never tells,  
 Look out! Look out ere you pass—  
 And look out for everything else!  
 A sign mis-read as you run  
 May turn retreat to a rout—  
 For all things under the sun,  
 (*Chorus*) All patrols look out!<sup>484</sup>

In choosing to include this song, W. J. Dane, the editor for the September 1908 edition, demonstrated how he envisioned the Movement and how he wished it to be presented to other boys. Wodehouse’s parody of the Scouting Movement through his protagonist Clarence Chugwater is made ever more effective in demonstrating Scouting’s nationalist tendencies. Dane’s inclusion of this poem not only demonstrates the type of stories these boys included in their community magazine, but reinforces the soldierly image the editors disseminated to the rest of the troop. Likewise, such excerpts reflect the type of literature to which they would have been exposed in other aspects of their lives. Adventure and military fiction, as I highlighted in previous chapters, were widespread throughout Edwardian culture and boys incorporated such images into their Scouting experience.

Literary figures, both supporters and critics alike, addressed militarism and Scouting in their works during the Edwardian period. Writer Roland Walker depicted Scout Troops engaged in actual combat on the Western Front, which certainly gave grounds to socialist and

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<sup>484</sup> “A Patrol Song,” *The Raven* (September 1908).



Radical fears that Scouting attempted to militarize Britain's youth.<sup>485</sup> The image from Roland Walker's *Oscar Danby V.C.* (1916), is a visual representation of how he imagined the Scout's role in Britain.



'IMMEDIATELY AFTERWARDS HALF-A-DOZEN UHLANS APPEARED  
IN PURSUIT.'

[p. 161.]

**Figure 5.1. *Oscar Danby VC***

Roland Walker, *Oscar Danby, V. C.: A Tale of the Great European War* (London: Partridge, 1916).

<sup>485</sup> Walker, *Oscar Danby VC*, p. 4. For other contemporary fiction that depicted Scouts in war, see John Finnemore, *The Wolf Patrol* (1908), D. H. Parry, *The Scarlet Scouts* (1915), and Frank Fortune, *Stubbs and I* (1915).

Citizenship was depicted in Walker's fiction as the willingness to take up arms in defence of one's country. Furthermore, it is important to note the fighting style in which the Scouts are using in his novel to fight the Uhlans (German Calvary). Hiding behind natural cover, they are incorporating their Scout training of marksmanship, awareness of the surroundings, and stealth to kill their enemies. This highly sanitized image of battle serves as a stark contrast to the literary memory of actual combat during the First World War that would later be presented by writer-soldiers like Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon. Scenes from the novel, such as one where a captured German soldier exclaimed upon discovering his troop had been in battle with mere Boy Scouts: "Donner und blitz! If your boy scouts fight like this, what will not your army do?" represented Scouts as primary combatants and the youthful representatives of the superior British people.<sup>486</sup> Such portrayals, however, did not exist without criticism. Returning to Wodehouse's parody of Scouting, *The Swoop*, satirised the well-prepared Clarence Chugwater's role in national defence against invasion. Wodehouse mocked the idea that Boy Scouts would rise from the ashes of military defeat and return their nation to glory. More importantly, however, Scouts also reflected the idea that the Movement and the military were linked, at least in spirit. The fictional characters Oscar Danby and Clarence Chugwater are reflections of W. J. Dane and of other like-minded, real-life Boy Scouts.

Throughout 'left-wing' circles, people voiced concerns over the military image cultivated in the Scouting Movement; all the while Baden-Powell and his supporters maintained its peaceful mission. The aforementioned critiques, however, addressed an issue that Baden-Powell either ignored or did not seem to fully understand. Rosatstein and Hardie's accounts highlight an overall, somewhat intangible attitude that Scouting promoted the soldier as an idealised image in society, rather than an instrument of imperial aggression

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<sup>486</sup> Walker, *Oscar Danby*, p. 120.

or capitalist pawn. Baden-Powell failed to entertain the criticism that the very fact of using military images in Scouting contributed to a familiarization of the soldier in British society. Wartime publications such as the *Scouts' War Book*, however, which encouraged Scouts to “assist their country in the greatest trial in its long and glorious history” only reinforced the Movement’s critics’ position.<sup>487</sup> Likewise, the troop activities before and during the First World War contributed to the accusations of militarism in the Movement. Examining the public images and military-style activities Scout troops themselves demonstrated will allow us to better understand these boys’ relationship with Scouting and the broader nationalistic culture of Edwardian Britain.

### **Influences of Scout Membership**

Before examining the specific war-time and training activities of local troops and Scouts, it is necessary to address the historiographical debate which reflects criticism over the militaristic nature of Scouting since the very beginning of the Movement. Historians of Scouting have debated the militaristic tendencies and objectives of Baden-Powell, while broader British and Imperial historians often point towards Scouting and youth cultural trends as an indication of martial and masculine elements pervading Edwardian society.<sup>488</sup> Also, the debate over Scouting’s inherent or perceived militarism corresponded with the wider post-colonial and New Imperial discussions in academia during the 1980s. Most notably, historians John Springhall and Allen Warren’s exchanges brought the issue of Scouting’s militarism to the

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<sup>487</sup> *Scout' War Book: Designed to help Boy Scouts to help their Country, and to help boys who are not Scouts to become Scouts and make themselves efficient in the craft* (London: Lloyd's Weekly News, 1915), p. 5.

<sup>488</sup> See Hugh Cunningham, “The Language of Patriotism: 1750-1914,” *History Workshop*, 12 (1981), pp. 24-25; John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (London: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 103 and 196; Paris, *Warrior Nation*, p. 104; Andrew Thompson and Meaghan Kowalsky, “Social Life and Cultural Representation: Empire in the Public Imagination,” *Britain's Experience of Empire in the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Andrew Thompson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) p. 255; Caroline Bressey, *Empire, Race and the Politics of Anti-Caste* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013) p. 176.

forefront during this time. Springhall suggests that Baden-Powell and his supporters did indeed infuse elements of militarism directly into Scout curriculum.<sup>489</sup> As addressed in the first chapter, scholars like Tim Jeal, Timothy Parsons, Tammy Proctor, and Sam Pryke have likewise contributed to scholarship concerning Scouting's inherent, unconscious, or deliberate militarism in more recent publications. The role of the individual Scout in many works, however, is largely secondary to official or ideological viewpoints. Discussions at the time also focused much more on official narratives than on individual boys or their troops. Looking at the Scouts' own testimony will give us insight into the minds of these individual witnesses to the Movement. While Baden-Powell's own brand of militarism has been briefly addressed earlier in this chapter and in much richer detail in other researchers' works, this examination is more concerned with the voice of the boys themselves.<sup>490</sup> Examining the reasons some gave for joining the Scouts will demonstrate that some boys did indeed use the Movement as a mechanism for military training.

Looking back at *The Raven*, the 5<sup>th</sup> Clapham Troop magazine we can see that many Scouts consciously linked their Scout association with the military. The seventeen or eighteen year old Cecil Goddard, the troop's bugler and an active contributor to the community magazine, wrote that he joined the Movement to prepare him for military career. He wrote that "the reasons why I am a Boy Scout are—(i) Because if possible I am going to join the army one day, & scouting is a good recreation and preparation."<sup>491</sup> Goddard described his Scouting activities as "training," suggesting that while troop activities could be

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<sup>489</sup> Springhall, "Baden-Powell and the Boy Scout Movement" and *Youth, Empire and Society*, pp. 124-125

<sup>490</sup> For works that relate directly with the issue of militarism at the upper levels of Scouting see: Warren, "Baden-Powell, Scout Movement and Citizen Training (1986);" Rosenthal, *Character Factory* (1986); John Springhall, "Baden-Powell and the Boy Scout Movement (1987);" Robert H. MacDonald, *Sons of the Empire* (1993); Pryke, "Popularity of Nationalism (1998); Tammy Proctor, *Civilians in a World at War* (2010); Sarah Mills, "Be Prepared: Communism and the Politics of Scouting in 1950s Britain," *Contemporary British History*, 25.3 (2011), pp. 429-450, and Matthew Johnston, "Courting Public Favour: The Boy Scout Movement and the Accident of Internationalism, 1907-1929," *Historical Research*, 88.241 (2015).

<sup>491</sup> Goddard, *The Raven* (Sept 1908), p. 1.

fun, there was also an element of work involved.<sup>492</sup> Goddard reflected Baden-Powell's example that games should have a deeper purpose than fun alone. What Goddard's account shows, therefore, is an individual boy emulating Scouting's official concept of self-improvement and civic-minded service. This boy also believed that the Boy Scouts could be an opportunity to learn military-style training and discipline, regardless of Baden-Powell's refutation of the criticism he maintained throughout his life. As he claimed he became interested in the Movement because of military reasons, Goddard therefore used Scouting as a mechanism to express is already held ideals of citizenship and service.

Like Cecil Goddard, Scout John Frederick Ford also became interested in the Movement for military reasons. As the son of an Army officer, he grew up surrounded by the military his entire life, first in Gibraltar where his father was stationed, and then in England where his family returned in 1909.<sup>493</sup> Ford recorded that he and his father "kept our interest in the army so we joined the Boy Scouts."<sup>494</sup> The scoutmaster of his troop was even an army 'padre' [chaplain] who incorporated military elements into his boys' Scouting experience.<sup>495</sup> Ford's troop also used Army equipment from the local base during their outings, making the military an ever-present aspect of these boys' Scouting experience.<sup>496</sup> This particular scoutmaster was an adult Army careerist who formed his patrol around military norms, as was not uncommon, and the young Ford sought out a Scout troop specifically for this purpose. In order to facilitate training and maintain his family's link with the Army, he joined a Scout troop that functioned with a direct connection to the military. Likewise, this boy brought to the Movement his military enthusiasm, therefore amplifying any broader ideological positions taken by the official Scout narrative. The Scout organisation may not

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<sup>492</sup> Ibid.

<sup>493</sup> John Frederick Ford, *IWM Interview* (Interviewed by Lyn E. Smith for the Imperial War Museum) (1984), catalogue no. 8172 <<http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80007973>>.

<sup>494</sup> Ibid.

<sup>495</sup> Ibid.

<sup>496</sup> Ibid.

have been Army Cadets officially, yet these local practices, along with boys' individual motivations demonstrate that boys indeed used the Scouts as career preparation.

While the above examples demonstrates two boys' thought process for joining the Scouts in the pre-war years, the onset of war in 1914 encouraged many boys already in Scouts to join the Cadets. In a community magazine from the 52<sup>nd</sup> North London Troop, a Scout, Corporal G. D. Nokes was congratulated on his "promotion to Company Sergeant Major in the Stationers' School Cadet Corps."<sup>497</sup> Citing the compatibility in training this boy received in the Scouts, the passage continued to say "this is an additional testimony to the thoroughness of the training of the 52<sup>nd</sup> and we hope he will be successful both in his corps, and with his patrol."<sup>498</sup> Wartime efforts and military training in the Scouts will be covered in greater detail later in the chapter; however, at this stage it is important to note the crossover between these youth organisations. Regardless of Baden-Powell's resistance to merging Scouting directly with Cadet Corps, many boys took it upon themselves to link their associations. Given that groups like the Boys' Brigade and its offshoot, the more pacifist Boys' Life Brigade each originated through similar efforts to develop boys' moral and physical health, it is no surprise boys would be attracted to multiple groups.<sup>499</sup> The intersectionality of these boys' associations with youth organisations as well demonstrates that Scouting was used by some to express already held ideas of nationalism.

Allen Warren contends historians' assertions about the militaristic nature of Scouting by claiming that centralization of authority was too lax in the early days, while relying on Baden-Powell's own understanding of militarism as a continental phenomenon as justification for denying its application in Britain.<sup>500</sup> For Warren, citizenship training, not

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<sup>497</sup> 52<sup>nd</sup> *North London Troop Magazine*, p. 4.

<sup>498</sup> 52<sup>nd</sup> *North London Troop Magazine*, p. 4.

<sup>499</sup> See Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society* for more detailed analysis of the origins of the respective organisations.

<sup>500</sup> Warren, "Baden-Powell, Scout Movement and Citizen Training," pp. 376-378.

military preparation, was Baden-Powell's most crucial aim.<sup>501</sup> However, looking at individual boys' testimony reveal that it was the grassroots reality of early Scouting which amplified a militaristic function, regardless of Baden-Powell's nuanced views. Patrols and troops engaged with military training as they saw fit. While this thesis argues that more emphasis needs to be placed on youth agency for the development of the Scouting Movement, boys' individual initiatives did emerge alongside nationwide efforts to not only better understand and codify issues of childhood, but include youth in the political and cultural arenas.

As highlighted in the second chapter of this thesis, Scouting was one of many initiatives aimed at encouraging citizenship, health, and patriotism in youth. Given that Baden-Powell and Scouting were not alone in their endeavours to combat perceived dangers, it is necessary to analyse the national and cultural scope of youth movements and organisations. Looking at Scouting as one of many youth movements at the time will demonstrate two main points. First, that Scouting did not convert a large segment of British boys over to Scouting's ethos, but rather reinforced existing cultural norms. Second, Scouting provided these young Movement pioneers with a conduit through which they expressed themselves. Sam Pryke as well notes, in part through the use of oral histories from former Scouts, the importance autonomy played in the Scouting Movement's success.<sup>502</sup> While Pryke is right to note that freedom was perhaps more appealing to potential Scouts than the regimental style of the Boys' Bridge, the sources examined in this chapter demonstrate that the keenest Scouts did often develop militaristic drill and create a nationalistic curriculum for their own troops. Autonomy and self-reliance were key drawing aspects of the Movement as well as bedrocks to its ideological makeup, but the same individualism that encouraged boys to earn their own funds, for example, allowed them to

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<sup>501</sup> Ibid, p. 377.

<sup>502</sup> Pryke, "Popularity of Nationalism."

initiate rifle training programmes as part of their war contribution. Baden-Powell may have rejected official drill and cadet-style training, yet his programme drew in boys who used Scouting to train for military service just as it appealed to boys looking to camp. These two aspects of Scouting were not mutually exclusive, and were interwoven elements in the Movement. This thesis accepts Pryke's argument that Scouting's individualist nature was perhaps a more appealing aspect to many boys compared to the Cadets, Territorials, or the Church Lads Brigade, yet the Movement's inherent nationalism and military glorification was a larger drawing factor than Pryke and others have insisted.<sup>503</sup>

Viewing the Boy Scouts within the broader framework of youth experience further demonstrates that Scouting originated as a semi-organic movement, albeit influenced by a founding authority, before it was developed into an organisation. The importance in this transition is that Scouting's principles were already shared by many young Britons. Indeed, it was the autonomy Pryke highlights that allowed Scout troops to create their programmes, many of which followed along militaristic lines. There was also overlap in organisations. Of course boys had lives outside of their own youth groups and indeed communicated with friends and peers involved in other 'movements'. It was not uncommon for Scout troops to work with other organisations. The image below, for example, shows the 1<sup>st</sup> Weaste Troop from Greater Manchester posing for a photo with rifles they borrowed from a Boys' Brigade unit in the early winter of 1914.<sup>504</sup> Given the date of the photo, it can be suggested the First World War and military training motivated this troop's acquisition of the weapons. The leader in the middle, distinguishable from his uniform, appears to be the oldest, yet moving out from the centre the age of the boys appear to get younger. The Scouts on the outer ring seem to be in their very early teen years. These boys, however, as suggested by this photograph, portrayed themselves as the sole agents in their training. With no adult presence

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<sup>503</sup> Ibid, pp. 318-324.

<sup>504</sup> "1st Weaste Troop B.P. Boy Scouts Early Winter of 1914 outside Club Room in St Luke's RD Weaste," Manchester Central Library, GB124.DPA/1587/35.



presented in the photograph, this image demonstrated the individual initiative embodied by Boy Scouts.



**Figure 5.2. 1<sup>st</sup> Weaste Troop and Rifle Training**

“1st Weaste Troop B.P. Boy Scouts Early Winter of 1914 outside Club Room in St Luke's RD Weaste,” Manchester Central Library, GB124.DPA/1587/35.

The details and semantics of militarism appear to be the greatest cause for debate.

While Baden-Powell did not set out to breed a generation of super-soldiers, he did encourage an organised and prepared citizenry that would readily take up arms in defence of the country if the need should arise. This distinction did not impress many critics at the time or many scholars ever since. As Sam Pryke argues that Scouting did not implement a “tyrannical regime” to control their boys’ health and sexual behaviours, but instead encouraged structure and habit as a means by which their members would adhere to Scouting’s ideals, so too were

militaristic elements incorporated into the boys' activities through a chain of influence.<sup>505</sup>

Baden-Powell wrote of the benefits military-style training games had in fostering citizenship, while the local leaders established an organised structure in which boys could participate if they so chose. Again, as was the case in troop organisation analysed in chapter three, we see an enthusiastic youth leading their peers and encouraging a conservative nationalism through their own agency.

Accusations of militarism surrounded the Scouting Movement due to the official leaderships military backgrounds, their support among serving military officers, and the military activities performed at Scout functions.<sup>506</sup> For many of the boys, however, their trajectory for military service predated their involvement with Scouting. As argued in the second chapter, Scouting was one incarnation of a broader trend of Britain's patriotic culture during this time. Baden-Powell encouraged boys from public schools and upper social levels to act as role models for other boys, pointing towards an existing patriotism among boys from privileged backgrounds. Military service was seen not only the greatest test of one's masculinity, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, but also the ultimate way one could serve their nation. Baden-Powell wrote that if it were not for the Navy and the Army, "we should be this time have been talking French" and if those who wish to cut military funding "are allowed to have their way in the future we may as well learn German or Japanese."<sup>507</sup> Baden-Powell's message that "we must be careful to keep those Services supplied with good men who, like the scouts, must BE PREPARED to give their lives for their country at any time" propelled many Scouts to train for war and make themselves the best citizens they could be.<sup>508</sup> Many attacked the Movement for its militarism, while Baden-Powell and his supporters consistently denied the accusations. The following section will demonstrate that

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<sup>505</sup> Pryke, "Control of Sexuality," p. 24.

<sup>506</sup> Ibid, p. 16.

<sup>507</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: Original 1908 Edition*, p. 289.

<sup>508</sup> Ibid, p. 288.

while Scouts did indeed train for military action, it was often on their terms and through personal agency.

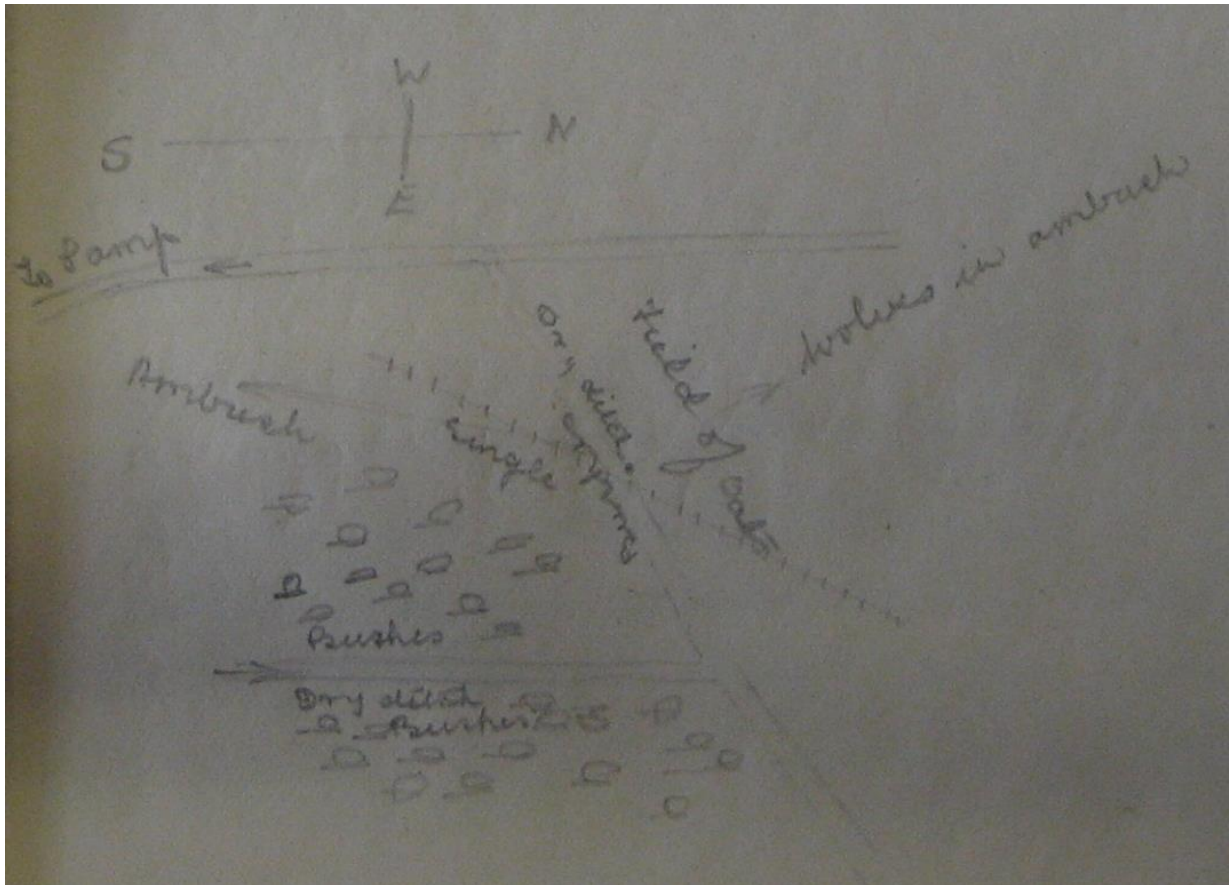
### **Military Training and Scout Activities**

A camp journal from Scout Himus from 1909 details military styled games the boys played while at a camp. The image of Himus's drawing outlined a game that involved Scout patrols setting up ambush points from which to 'attack' other boys.<sup>509</sup> While the boy did not describe the rules of the game in full detail, it appears that they used the natural cover of the brush and hills to conceal their location from 'the enemy.' When the opposing units drew near, they launched an 'attack' and captured the unsuspecting boys. In this case, Himus wrote that the "cuckoos & lions captured the wolves. Then marched back to camp" with their prisoners presumably in tow.<sup>510</sup> The pervasiveness of Baden-Powell's martial spirit in the Movement is not only evident in such games, but in the casual nature in which the young Scout described his experience. To him, it was a game like any other. There was no indication in his writing that Himus was even aware that such activities were evocative of a wider tone of militarism in the Movement. The boys were not only playing games, which they did throughout their lives, but they were also being inundated with tales of national heroism and conditioned to be citizens along the lines in which Baden-Powell, Scout authority, and local leaders intended. Games such as this one normalised battle as part civic responsibility.

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<sup>509</sup> Himus, "10 September 1909," *Boy Scouts Camp Diary*.

<sup>510</sup> Ibid.



**Figure 5.3. Mock-Battle Sketch.**

Godfrey Himus, "9 August 1909," *Boy Scout Camp Diary*, Scout Association Archives, TC/85.

While boys like Himus, who may or may not have conceptualised militarism on a conscious level, were subjected to military style games during camp, many young leaders of the Movement were active participants. Looking at the local participants of the 52<sup>nd</sup> North London Troop "Assault-at-Arms" production, which I have already highlighted, demonstrates that boys took a proactive approach to military training and presentation. The troop founders and leaders, E. Mayston Cattell, A. E. Marriott, N. H. Molyneux, and others were all members of the military. The physical drill of the performance was presented by Cattell, the retreat by Marriott, and the "Balaclava Melee" was a competition between the patrol leaders

and corporals on one side, against the rank-and-file Scouts on the other.<sup>511</sup> This performance had the dual purpose of raising money for the troops, as well as presenting their troop identity as young defenders of the country. As the organisers of this event were both troop leaders and soldiers, the public audience would have seen a Boy Scout troop whose identity was intrinsically imbued with a martial element. These boys chose to represent their troop in a military light, which suggests they intended for the public to view their Boy Scout troop as a quasi or even junior branch of the military in all but name. They used Scouting as a way to express their commitment to their country through acting out soldierly activities.

In another section of London, just a short distance away, the boys of the 1<sup>st</sup> Stoke Newington participated in a military style activity that also incorporated mock battles and military operations. The group's scoutmaster, a man referred to as Captain Howson, "arranged and commanded" an event called the "Midnight Raid on the Green Patrol."<sup>512</sup>

While it is unclear whether the game took place at the time of the event or if it was retold to the audience, the synopsis of the game went as followed:

The Green Patrol of Boy Scouts have been told to scout the country for 20 miles round in search of the enemy the Orange Patrol. Night overtakes the 'Greens' they are forced to make a halt. Two of their number are sent to find a suitable camping ground and then to report. The patrol follows and encamps for the night. They have been tracked and followed however by two of the enemy's Scouts, who having derived every information possible, return to report to their officer. On the way back they are seen by the picket of the Green Patrol, who awakes the Bugler. The Alarm is sounded—the 'Green' get prepared as soon as possible but the 'Oranges' are quicker and have soon opened fire. The Green Patrol is vanquished and the Oranges still alive proclaim a victory for their King.<sup>513</sup>

The overt military language from the scoutmaster as well as the battle simulation on which this game was based suggests an imagined link between these Scouts and soldiers. The boys scouted for the enemy and had a simulated ambush, which ended in a firefight in which one patrol was defeated. Scoutmaster Howson even gave the glory of the victory to the king,

<sup>511</sup> 52<sup>nd</sup> N. London Troop, "Assault-at-Arms."

<sup>512</sup> "1<sup>st</sup> Stoke Newington Company of Boy Scouts: Programme of Display."

<sup>513</sup> Ibid.

positioning Scouting activities within an official, national setting. Military imagery was central is this troops' public representation and a function in these boys' Scouting experience.

Another important element in this example was this troop's lack of conformity with official guidelines. This troop did not follow Baden-Powell's rules or guidelines to name patrols after animals, a suggestion reflecting Scouting's naturalist, romantic aspirations rather than its military origins.<sup>514</sup> That this troop referred to its patrols by colours, not animals, which *Scouting for Boys* prescribed, reflects the autonomous nature on which early troops functioned. For the 1<sup>st</sup> Stoke Newington boys, Scouting was a way for them to express their national devotion through militaristic pageantry and simulated battle. While in this instance Scouting embodied the martial spirit that early critics and historians condemned, these slight detractions from Scouting's official rules at the local level indicate that these boys and leaders operated within a much larger society imbued with patriotic devotion and militaristic romance. The Scouting Movement was a product of this social atmosphere through which boys could mould their own needs and desires.

All of these boys and troops—Godfrey Himus, the boys from 52<sup>nd</sup> North London, and the Scouts of the 1<sup>st</sup> Stoke Newington—recorded an experience with Scouting that reflected either a martial tone, or one that offered them preparation for a future conflict. Furthermore, Himus and the Stoke Newington Company recorded their experience in 1909, indicating a level of militarism and anxiety before the Movement reached its second year of existence. So we can see from these examples, therefore, that a militaristic tone emerged from the beginning of the Movement. These boys brought with them their own ideas of national service, while the structures of Scouting gave them a mechanism through which they could operate and amplify military fantasies.

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<sup>514</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: Original 1908 Edition*, p. 41.

*Scouting for Boys*, *The Scout*, and other official literary material contained many notes and games of a military nature, similar to the one found in Himus's diary, that encouraged boys to exercise, drill, and play in make-believe battles. For example, in *Scouting for Boys*, Baden-Powell described two games boys could play that would simulate battle and provide citizen-soldier training. The game "Shoot Out" was played by two teams of boys who would throw rocks at "bottles or bricks" that "represent[ed] the opposing patrol."<sup>515</sup> Once the game starts, "it goes on, if there are plenty of stones, till the whole of one patrol is killed."<sup>516</sup> Another idea for a game was called "The Storming of Badajoz," whereby a "British" team would charge the fortress held by the "French."<sup>517</sup> Baden-Powell provided a short history of the assault during the Napoleonic Wars to his readers as well, highlighting British bravery and reinforcing the link between Boy Scouts and British heroes of the past. Scouts were often encouraged to square off as English and French teams during these types of games. Again, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, Scout rhetoric may have stressed a universal Scout brotherhood, yet old nationalisms manifested themselves throughout the Movement, even in games. These games and others appear throughout personal Scout testimony. The following section will demonstrate that Scouts incorporated Baden-Powell's instructions on war games into their own Scouting experience during the pre-war years which not only reflected Baden-Powell's military-minded approach to youth education, but reinforced an image of militarism throughout the Movement.

The official line from Headquarters consistently maintained that Scouting was not military training, however, the examples of boys engaging in soldierly activities such as these speak to the contrary. Furthermore, the camps and performances were not overseen by Baden-Powell, but organised at the local level. These were individuals and the Scouts themselves, some of whom were in active service, providing an atmosphere of military life

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<sup>515</sup> Ibid, p. 287.

<sup>516</sup> Ibid.

<sup>517</sup> Ibid.

through games and even drilling and training their Scouts in military techniques for military service. As Baden-Powell's definition of militarism was predicated on a scale, relative to other nations, he did not accept that Scouting was militaristic. Likewise, he asserted that military-style training was merely an effort to prepare British boys for war if that undesirable event should arise. Furthermore, the above examples from Scout Goddard's comments on Hardie, supportive members of the public, and Baden-Powell indicate that many in the Movement mocked the idea that Scouting was militaristic because they associated militarism with their understanding of aggression. They failed to see what they participated in as militaristic due to their Anglo-centric, nationalistic viewpoints. Baden-Powell's denial of militarism in the Movement related directly with his assumption of Britain's imperial benevolence. The Movement, however, not only failed to prevent war, it conditioned youth to believe that participation was noble and part of their duty as British citizens. The games and stories the troops performed normalised images of war for the boys, while Baden-Powell's yarns of adventure and military nobility reinforced a sense of dignity in its service. Even before these boys joined the war, they practiced fighting.

While the boys practiced camp setting and bunker digging, perhaps no Scout activity illustrated what 'being prepared' for war symbolised greater than rifle training. An advisement slogan, for example, for the Laralle Air Gun found in the *Graphic* read that "for the Empire every boy should shoot," while Baden-Powell told his readers that "every boy should prepare himself, by learning how to shoot and to drill, to take his share in defence of the Empire."<sup>518</sup> While advances in machine gun, chemical, and artillery technology made possible the mass killing of people within a shorter amount of time, the rifle remained the most important weapon of the war, when stalking and path finding abilities proved to be all but useless anachronisms in industrial trench warfare. Baden-Powell and Scout Headquarters

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<sup>518</sup> 'Advertisements and Notices', *The Graphic*, (1 September 1890) and Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, p. 277.



stressed the importance of accuracy and training, which was reinforced by cultural ephemera such as the above advertisement. The boys involved in the Movement continued this culture of youth weapon training for the sake of national defence in their Scouting activities.

The boys of the 52<sup>nd</sup> North London Crouch End Troop escalated their camp activities from bivouacking and campfire cooking in 1909, to rifle training during the war. The troop's community magazine shows that members were given the book *Miniature Rifle Shooting*, by L. R. Tippins to study and learn basics of shooting.<sup>519</sup> In order to apply the lessons they learned from reading into practice, the troop affiliated with the National Rifle Association and installed a shooting range at their Scout troop headquarters.<sup>520</sup> Shooting practice was not compulsory for troop membership, but was encouraged by the local leadership. The magazine editor wrote that "it is to be hoped that keen interest will be sustained in the shooting, the importance of being a good shot cannot be over estimated (*sic*)."<sup>521</sup> Shooting, like other Scout tests, were meant to teach boys a skill and build character. As the third chapter of this thesis argued, the 'entertainment' badge provided boys a means to earn money, thereby instilling in them a sense of self-sufficiency, so too did marksmanship training further cement Scouting's proficiency in national defence. Accounts like that of the 52<sup>nd</sup> North London troop suggests that many of these boys and troop leaders were fully aware that the Movement would play a significant role in Britain's military and war-time efforts.

Like the Crouch End Troop, the boys of the 1<sup>st</sup> Wallington Patrol also took up shooting practice during the war. A Troop journal from 1915 reveals that, like the Crouch End Troop's progression from camp drills to rifle training, the 1<sup>st</sup> Wallington evolved their training from parade to rifle proficiency. During a 3 November 1915 troop meeting, Edwin Piggott, the approximately eighteen-year-old troop patrol leader, addressed his concern over the preparedness of his boys in the face of war and national service. The troop secretary

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<sup>519</sup> 57<sup>th</sup> North London Troop: *Troop Magazine*, p. 8.

<sup>520</sup> Ibid, p. 8.

<sup>521</sup> Ibid, p. 8.

wrote that “Patrol Leader Piggott observed that though he believed in football, he felt it his clear duty, as a ~~member~~ Scout of eligible age, to devote every Saturday afternoon & evening, his only spare time, to Defence Corps Training.”<sup>522</sup> Piggott’s sentiment stems from a debate the troop leaders were having about how their weekends should be spent. Several members stated that if the older boys deserted the football club, the team would suffer with only the younger Scouts to fill the roster. A compromise was made that the Scouts participating in training would be available for football on alternative Saturdays.<sup>523</sup> Football was still a concern for boys, but military training became a priority to Scouts and troop leaders during a time when they knew they may soon participate in it. For Piggott, Scouting was not merely a hobby or excuse to play with his friends, but an opportunity and mechanism through which he could train for war. Edwin Piggott did indeed enlist in the military as a clerk the following year. His commitment to serving his country could be seen during his Scouting days through his push to set football aside for the good of the nation. However, as shown in chapter four, sport and fitness were encouraged to maintain a strong and vibrant youth citizenry. Even though their troop leader compromised and incorporated football into the curriculum, they still fulfilled the Scouting commitment to promote health. This young man viewed Scouting as an apparatus for national service and expressed his commitment to his country through the Movement.

Piggott’s fellow Scout, Assistant Scoutmaster Neate, also believed that parading was insufficient as preparation for war. With his encouragement, the troop took up rifle training with the help of a local rifle club. The boys had access to the Carshalton Shooting Range on the condition that “each boy using the range [was] to pay annual subscriptions of £1 to fund Carshalton Rifle Club” and that all ammunition was purchased from the club itself.<sup>524</sup> The

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<sup>522</sup> *Group Committee Minutes: Sept 1915-June 1921, 1<sup>st</sup> Wallington Troop*, 3 November 1915.

<sup>523</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>524</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 December 1915.

Scout troop itself paid for half of the ammunition costs for each boy, up to fifty rounds.<sup>525</sup>

This is also another case where the cost of Scouting was quite prohibitive for many boys and families during this time, reinforcing the privileged nature of the Movement. The enthusiasm of the young assistant scoutmaster garnered the troop special training from shooting experts and secured them extra time on the range.<sup>526</sup> Again, we can see the Scouts pursuing military training through their own initiative, while emulating the lessons found in their shared Scouting text. Baden-Powell encouraged such preparations and made numerous statements about the merits of military service, but it was ultimately left up to the boys to put official encouragement into action. Examples of boys like Assistant Scoutmaster Neate demonstrate how this movement of hyper-citizen youth reinforced an overall culture of militarism when war came.

Rifle training remained constant throughout the war for Scouts in the Wallington area. Minutes from the 1<sup>st</sup> Carshalton troop in 1917 reveal that collective troop funds went to support half of the rifle club fees for the boys, a significant sum of £8/6.<sup>527</sup> While the boys used communal funds to supplement the fees, it appears individuals were still left to pay half. Again, we can see that troop activities were more open and available to those who could afford the costs, either through their own merits or their families' financial means. Financial privilege emerged consistently in the boys' Scouting experience, even when national security and military preparation were at stake.

What is most important from this 1917 example of rifle training, however, is that boys from this troop and troops all over Britain had already died in combat. Patrol Leader Bernard Tate, for example, from the 1<sup>st</sup> Sutton Troop was killed in action during war in November of

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<sup>525</sup> Ibid.

<sup>526</sup> Ibid.

<sup>527</sup> "1<sup>st</sup> Carshalton Minutes," 13 November 1917, Scout Association Archives, TSA/GRO/COU/LON/2/1/A15/2.

1916.<sup>528</sup> While the boys took their training seriously before the beginning of the war, real experiences of loss would have magnified the severity of the war as well as the importance of training. War preparation, therefore, was not an abstract concept or a simple game to occupy the boys' imagination, but a necessary activity to serve the country and protect their own lives. Military training and war survival became a necessary part of the Scouting experience for some of these boys.

While many boys in the 1<sup>st</sup> Wallington Troop took up rifle training for explicitly military purposes, Alwyn Dawson of the 1<sup>st</sup> Chiswick maintained that shooting for his troop was solely for sport. He wrote in a local troop history booklet that shooting “was the first of the Troop’s general activities—run by the boys themselves yet fully within the cover of the troop.”<sup>529</sup> Dawson defended marksman training by stating “there was nothing military about this” and that shooting was “encouraged for its character training in self control (*sic*).”<sup>530</sup> Given this account was written many years after the troop’s founding and that Dawson highlighted the controversy surrounding shooting and militarism, the legitimacy of his recreational claims are somewhat suspect. It would be unreasonable speculation to accuse Dawson of deliberately misleading the reader in order to exonerate his troop from militaristic tendencies, so we must take his testimony as it exists, while understanding the broader debate and circumstances. Dawson’s attempt to distance himself and his fellow Scouts from militarism is indicative of his awareness of the criticisms surrounding the Movement, as well as a further example of the boy-led nature of the early Movement. Despite his friends joining the Cadets, Dawson attempted to separate his Scouting activities from military preparedness and militaristic values.

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<sup>528</sup> “First World War Roll of Honour,” Scout Association Archive online collection, <http://www.scoutsrecords.org/collection.php?dil=&icerik=43&bparent=0&>.

<sup>529</sup> Dawson, *1<sup>st</sup> Chiswick*, p. 15.

<sup>530</sup> *Ibid.*

A closer reading of his account, however, reveals that Dawson attempted to defend his comrades and separate sporting marksmen from boys who did, as Dawson put it, “found himself under pressure” to transfer their shooting skills to the military.<sup>531</sup> Dawson may not have viewed Scouting as a steppingstone for the military, but what he failed to acknowledge is that many boys did use the Scouts to develop or prepare themselves for military service. Not all boys held the zealous patriotism Baden-Powell may have wished to instil in Scouting, but the framework of the Movement was as such that many nationalistic-minded youth found an opportunity to train for the military through the Boy Scouts. As much as Scouting was a game to many members, to certain boys it was also a youth collective through which they could develop and express martial citizenship.

In conclusion, the common threads between the three troops were that shooting was designed into the Scouting docket by the boys themselves and that each group believed learning to shoot would build their character. Again, like bathing and camping, shooting was designed to cultivate brotherhood and develop morality. Each character-building activity was designed to mould Scouts into good citizens. Furthermore, while Scouting was about character building and citizen training to Dawson, it was also specifically about military training and war to Piggott, Neate, and Goddard. The hundreds of thousands of boys who contributed to the Movement before 1918 each viewed Scouting through their own lenses, which emphasises the individual and youth-directed nature of the pre-war Scouts as a movement. The philosophical foundations and activities, however, attracted boys of a particularly patriotic nature who were willing to participate in war for their nation’s interests. Sport shooting, as Dawson maintained, did not necessarily mean war training; many people target shoot and hunt animals for sport without a military component involved. Hunting, however, was a key aspect of constructing masculine and martial identities among Victorian

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<sup>531</sup> Ibid, p. 16.

and Edwardian men that translated into military service.<sup>532</sup> The activity, however, is another example of how Scouting ‘games’ could and did translate to military service. Baden-Powell believed that everything a Scout did during camp or leisure should have a purpose and give one practical, physical, and moral development. Shooting, like camping and tracking, could be recreational in isolation, but when combined with Baden-Powell’s textual guidance and a wider discourse of youth literature that promoted imperial service, along with the testimony of the boys who used Scouting as military training, the Movement should be viewed as a youth expression of hyper citizenship whose members were not only willing to participate in war for their country, but actively trained and consciously developed curriculum that would make them more proficient than their peers.

### **Remembering the War**

Boy Scout activities, from camping to rifle shooting, proved to be useful skills in war for many soldier-Scouts. Many acknowledged that Scouting prepared them for the physical demands of the war, while the Movement’s moral structures supported their sense of duty. This following section will look at testimony from Scout-soldiers who recorded their experience of military life during and after the First World War. Examining how these individuals understood their roles as Scout and soldier will demonstrate that they often connected the two associations. These accounts also serve as the fulfilment of the Scouting motto to ‘be prepared’ expressed by Headquarters before the war and in earlier Scout writings. A number of the boys gave credit to their Scout training for its war-time preparation, but also displayed a sense of superiority and even arrogance in their association with the Movement. They not only believed that Boy Scout training provided them with

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<sup>532</sup> See Mangan and McKenzie, “Duty unto Death.”

useful field skills, but also that its character development mission did indeed transform them into better citizens than their peers. The following section will examine several soldiers' recollection of their pre-war Scouting after the guns fell silent.

This thesis has traced Alexander Fisher from his childhood, when he watched South African War veterans returning home and read about Baden-Powell in his youth magazines. His experience concludes with two important aspects of his military life: his role in the war and how he viewed his service. He served as a medic before his deployment to some of the more brutal positions on the Front. While he survived, he was wounded and fought throughout the war's duration.<sup>533</sup> Fisher presented himself as a Scout immediately upon his arrival into the Army. He recalled later that the medical officer, a Colonel Green, "ask me if I understood 'First Aid' and on me replying in the affirmative, he further questioned me as to where I learnt it, and seemed very pleased when I mentioned the Boy Scouts."<sup>534</sup> Fisher noted that his First Aid training in the Scouts benefited his military career, but proudly noted that Colonel Green praised the Movement and its members for their service. Fisher continued to state that Green "was a great believer in the Movement, and actually felt proud to meet me—fancy that from a colonel to a private."<sup>535</sup> Fisher's Boy Scout association provided him promotion and earned him the respect of a military official, who approved of the Movement's work. As this story is written entirely in Fisher's voice, however, the praise given says more about Fisher's beliefs in Scouting's importance than it does about Colonel Green. This official seal-of-approval for Scouting and Fisher's role in the Boy Scouts indicates that the young Scout-soldier not only used Scouting to prepare himself for the military, but linked the Movement with greater national efforts of defence.

Fisher's final comments on his experience in the military also evoked the lessons and language of Scouting. He wrote that "on the whole I consider it is a splendid life for any

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<sup>533</sup> "Alexander Fisher: British Army WWI Service Records, 1914-1920," <[www.ancestrylibrary.com](http://www.ancestrylibrary.com)>.

<sup>534</sup> Fisher, *My Life*, p. 35.

<sup>535</sup> Ibid.

young fellow to lead, provided he can use his will to it best advantage (*sic*).”<sup>536</sup> Fisher demonstrated Scouting’s fundamental teaching of usefulness, Scout Law no. 3. Baden-Powell attempted to transform Britain’s youth from lazy, effeminate boys into productive young men. Fisher emulated this ideal by speaking to hypothetical readers and encouraging them to pursue a military life. Fisher also understood ‘usefulness’ within a greater social framework. He connected Scouting with the military, incorporating the Movement’s fundamental ideas of patronage, industriousness, and civic responsibility. Fisher’s testimony is, however, heavily influenced by Baden-Powell. This memoir is an act, a careful moulding of an image to conform to an interpretation of what a true man and good Scout embodied. Fisher’s journal exemplifies Alberto Melucci’s assertion that “individuals acting collectively ‘construct’ their action by means of ‘organised’ investments: they define in cognitive terms the field of possibilities and limits they perceive while at the same time activating their relationships so as to give sense to their ‘being together.’”<sup>537</sup> This man constructed himself in the image of the ideal Scout and citizen according to his understanding of what Scouting was meant to embody. Through the appropriation of Baden-Powell’s teachings, his personal imperial and national mission of preparedness, efficiency, and duty became transmitted onto British society through these boys. As Chartier observes that the author is “dependent” on the audience who “appropriate” his or her works through reading, Baden-Powell’s message became manifested through enthusiastic Scouts like Fisher.<sup>538</sup> In telling the reader at the beginning of his memoir, that ‘Scoutio’ and ‘The Scout’ were his nicknames, he linked his personal identity with Scouting, asserting that everything he demonstrated in his text, from

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<sup>536</sup> Fisher, *My Life*, p. 40.

<sup>537</sup> Alberto Melucci, “The Process of Collective Identity,” *Social Movements and Culture*, ed. by Hank Johnston and Bert Klandermans (London: University College London Press, 1995), p. 43.

<sup>538</sup> Chartier, *Order of Books*, p. 28.



moralising to other boys to his military service, was a result of the ideals represented in the Movement.<sup>539</sup>

Scout Edwin Bigwood of Bristol also recorded that Scouting benefitted his time in the military and surviving the First World War. He stated that Scouting “helped a great deal. There was a great advantage being a Scout.”<sup>540</sup> Not only did Bigwood think Scouting’s activities prepared him for life on the Front, but he felt a sense of superiority over his comrades. As I quoted in the second chapter regarding Scouts’ sense of moral superiority, he said that “we felt we were more important than the others because we knew the rules more.”<sup>541</sup> This statement suggests that Bigwood’s Scout troop prepared him for the physical aspects of war as well as teaching him some of the ideals behind it. The comment further highlights the Victorian tradition, adopted by the Boy Scouts, to ‘play the game.’ He understood his enlistment into the military as part of his duty as a citizen. Bigwood and his troop heard of the outbreak of war on a farmer’s radio while camping. He recalled that his scoutmaster then marched them to the coast, where they sang “Rule Britannia” towards the ocean.<sup>542</sup> This display of patriotism encouraged by the scoutmaster was reflected in Bigwood’s own testimony. He claimed that the “British Empire was really marvelous then. We thought the world of the British Empire...you felt very proud indeed of your country.”<sup>543</sup> He voluntarily went to war because of his sense of duty and support of his nation and Empire, all the while linking his association with Scouting and the military.

These boys interpreted Baden-Powell’s teachings and rhetoric and incorporated it into not only the Scouting Movement, but on their service towards the Empire, the nation, and society. Baden-Powell and other Scout officials remained adamant that Scouting was not intended as authorised military training throughout its existence, yet many of these boys’

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<sup>539</sup> Fisher, *My Life*, p. 8.

<sup>540</sup> Bigwood, *IWM Interview*.

<sup>541</sup> Ibid.

<sup>542</sup> Ibid.

<sup>543</sup> Ibid.

used Scouting for exactly that purpose. While Scouting was not an official military training organisation the way Cadet school was, Scouts did express ideas of militarism and military preparedness in their writings and took it upon themselves to train and organise for war.

What is important with this issue is not necessarily what Baden-Powell intended his Movement to be, but how it was interpreted by those involved. Simply stated, because Scouts like Goddard felt Scouting would be a good background for his military career, then it became a military-like movement for him. The Movement was a mechanism through which he could hone his skills to whatever end he saw fit. To say the Boy Scouts was devoid of militaristic elements removes the agency of the boys and ignores the fact that Scouting started as a movement of boys brought together by a set of similar ideas and aspirations.

We again return to this key point of contention: what the intention for Scouting was for the founders and how it was interpreted and performed by the members. The records I have discovered and used throughout this thesis demonstrate that many boys had personally developed ideas about what Scouting was that coincided with what the founders intended. Some Scouts joined the Movement from either pressure from the friends or parents or for the opportunity to have fun outdoors without giving much thought to the nationalistic underpinnings. Many others, however, like Fisher from Manchester, A. P. Cattell from North London, Bigwood from Bristol, Goddard from Clapham, and Donald Penrose, who joined the Scouts as a means to serve his country after being denied cadet training for a year due to whooping cough, all used the Movement as training for war and felt the two associations were connected.<sup>544</sup> Participating in the First World War was perceived as a natural move from many in the Boy Scouts. It was exactly this association with the Scouting that propelled many boys to join the military at the outbreak of war.

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<sup>544</sup> Donald Michael Penrose, *Interview with Donald Michael Penrose* (Interviewed by Lyn E. Smith for the Imperial War Museum (1984), catalogue no. 8172, <<http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80007973>>).

One of the key legacies of the First World War, as articulated by John Morrow, was that the industrial world became an “uncontrollable orgy of violence during the next third of a century” in which “the European masses, stoked with xenophobic nationalism, went willingly, even gaily, to a conflict which their leaders, imbued with a perverse combination of arrogance and fatalism, believed they could control.”<sup>545</sup> The jingoism and military romance was met with such incredible devastation never experienced in modern European history. While this effect was experienced in many areas of society, the Scouting Movement embodied the build-up more than most. The Movement was built upon ideas of national duty and patriotism. The youth-led parades, assisted the government during war, promoted the Empire, and manned the ranks on the front lines, only to be met with a war that little-resembled the images presented in their campfire yarns and childhood stories. While we often imagine the discrepancy between militaristic romance and the brutal lived experience of the war through literature like Remarque’s *All Quiet on the Western Front* or Owen’s poetic denouncement of “the old lie” that it is glorious to die for ones’ country in battle, these Scout testimonies provide a direct chain from childhood stories and patriotic ideals to combat. The war was also, however, a culmination of many of the boys’ Scouting experience in that their lives were taken in battle.

Many of the boys who performed the military-themed skits for their troops, went on camping trips that incorporated mock battle games, engaged in coast-watching, and practiced rifle shooting participated in the First World War. While the wartime experience of Scout-soldiers is an integral aspect of the individual’s association with Scouting, what is pertinent to this examination is the pre-war conditioning toward nationalism and the effect it had on the boys. Members of the 52<sup>nd</sup> North London troop that performed the Assault-at-Arms show, who witnessed and engaged in acts that sanitised war’s brutality through games and concert,

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<sup>545</sup> John H. Morrow, Jr., *The Great War: An Imperial History* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. xii.

witnessed a war that had little resemblance to their Scouting games. Cyril Hargreaves, a young clerk from North London was killed 15 August 1917, along with his Scouting comrades Frank Cattle and Ernest Childe.<sup>546</sup> Assistant Scoutmaster John (Jack) Newson from Chiswick, whose troop practiced shooting as part of citizen training, died in Flanders three weeks after suffering from wounds he sustained on the front. 84,000 Scouts enlisted in the First World War, while 8,000 were killed.<sup>547</sup> While there is not enough room or surviving sources to discuss the experience of each individual Scout and although boys experienced Scouting and the war differently, it is clear that many of these boys and young men would have been exposed to the same rhetoric from the top that glorified military service and may have even been encouraged to train for combat by their local leaders. Furthermore, not only were Scouts subjected to a certain amount of conditioning, but many of these boys' participation in Scouting amplified the militaristic tone in the early days of the Movement. Scouting allowed a certain amount of autonomy, and while many boys joined for games and recreation, other boys used its structures to train for war and disseminate military and nationalistic values.

Maurice Gamon's enthusiasm for Scouting, as evidenced in his writing on the principles of self-sacrifice in particular, embodied the ethos the Movement wished to instill boys around the world. He wrote that a "Scout must Be Prepared; the Scout Law demands it" and that a Scout "must Be Prepared to give his life, if need be, to save a fellow creature in distress."<sup>548</sup> His words serve as a tragic foreshadowing for his own death in the war on 1 July 1916. Like many of his other fellow Scouts and comrades, Gamon linked his identity with Scouting to broader social ideals and used the Movement as a mechanism through which he could contribute to his country and local community. Likewise, we can trace and make connections of nationalism and imperialism in the stories of these boys. Alexander Fisher,

<sup>546</sup> 52<sup>nd</sup> N. London Troop, "Roll of Honour, 1914-1919."

<sup>547</sup> Scout Association Archives, <<http://www.scoutsrecords.org>>.

<sup>548</sup> Gamon, *Spirit of Scouting*, p. 51.

for example, was inspired and entertained by adventure stories and military parades as a child, performed plays and skits steeped in imperial imagery, participated in civic duties, and finally fought in a war for which he believed was his responsibility as a citizen of Britain. These boys' stories tell us much more than what they did in the Boy Scouts during their youth. Their recorded testimonies offer us a glimpse into their Scouting practice and help us interpret the ways in which young Edwardians experienced nationalism during the years before the First World War.

Furthermore, each of these individuals demonstrated different opinions and beliefs about the war at different times. Tammy Proctor cites the famous Scout Roland Philipps, while posthumously lauded by Headquarters as the ideal Scout-soldier—he is recorded as “one of the truest Scouts who ever lived”—personally expressed to a friend that he had regrets about joining the military.<sup>549</sup> He nevertheless, carried out his duty as soldier and Scout, and as stated in the previous chapter, encouraged boys to patrol London's streets with the police as part of their civic responsibility. In a postcard sent to a fellow Scout-soldier and friend, Reg W. Draidmond wrote that “I am very sorry to hear of your brothers' death, but they have given their lives for a good cause, and you must always keep up the Scouts 'smile.’”<sup>550</sup> The sentiments expressed by these two Scouts were different, one lamented his decision to join the military while the other embraced it. Each of them, however, fulfilled Baden-Powell's encouragement to do their part in serving their country. The Scouting Movement represented an organised group of boys, captivated by games and tales of adventure, who created a youth culture based on citizenship, civic duty, and if need should arise, national defenders.

Many Scouts did not join the military or Movement because of overtly nationalistic ideas, but they were subjected to military training, patriotic romance, and encouraged to put

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<sup>549</sup> Proctor, *Civilians in a World War*, p. 30.

<sup>550</sup> Reg W. Draidmond, “Postcard,” Scout Association Archives, no. 188 *World War I*, TC/118.

the needs of their country ahead of their own, not only by Baden-Powell, but by other boys who were sympathetic to Scouting's mission. Given that the majority of these Scouts did not leave detailed records of their pre-war lives we are left to fill in the blanks. While many historians on the Left have traditionally been hesitant to view Edwardian militarism as a popular phenomenon, the Scouting Movement demonstrates just that.<sup>551</sup> That A.E. Marriot organised and performed Victorian style battle manoeuvres, only to be wounded by a gas attack three years later shows that as an organiser and founder of the troop, he and boys like him further reflect and embodied Baden-Powell's message.<sup>552</sup> Emulation of Scouting's textual encouragement to be knights of the Empire by a large number of Britain's boys not only centralised conservative ideology around a structured youth movement, but served as a mechanism through which boys trained for war and justified their military service for the sake of responsible citizenship.

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<sup>551</sup> Summers, "Militarism in Britain before the Great War," p. 105.

<sup>552</sup> 52<sup>nd</sup> N. London Troop, "Roll of Honour, 1914-1919."

## Conclusion

I had three broad objectives for this thesis: to recover the experience of Scouts in their own words; to demonstrate that Scouting reflected a culture of patriotism and national service that already existed in Edwardian Britain; and to use Scouting as a lens through which we can examine the ways in which movements, broader ideologies, and political initiatives are developed by individuals and enthusiastic supporters at the ground level, in their everyday lives. By looking at Scouting at the local level, we can see how boys and troops used the Movement to contribute to their communities, how they served their country, and expressed their understanding of social and political issues. Political, press, and literary figures at the time attempted to speak for the boys, while the history of Scouting has largely focused on Baden-Powell and the ideology that encouraged Scouting's development, my thesis has demonstrated that testimony and records left by the Scouts themselves are crucial for a better understanding of the lived experience of the Scouting Movement.

This thesis has shown that Scouting was developed through youth initiative. We saw this with the creation of troops in the earliest days, when Scouting only existed in text format. Enthusiastic individuals from all corners of the country took the textual encouragement in *Scouting for Boys* and shaped it into a movement. Their agency was further demonstrated in the creation of rifle training programmes in local troops. Likewise, the fact that Scouts joined the Cadet Force, despite Baden-Powell's resistance to the merger of the two organisations shows that boys used Scouting to suit their own needs, adopting and adapting the parts with which they most favourably responded. Instances in which boys engaged in political discourse and debate in their records shows their active engagement with the controversies and the social world around them. The Edwardian Scouts and pioneers of the Movement were not simply participants or witnesses, but developers and agents in a movement

dedicated to civic responsibility, patriotism, personal development, and national service. They were both students and teachers of Scouting's brand of moral and character training. Edwardian boys were long exposed and sympathetic to these virtues and ideas and manifested them through their Scouting experience.

The Scouting Movement was also a reflection of Victorian and Edwardian efforts to educate youth and a representation of broader nationalism that existed in society, education, and popular culture. The individuals and troops I have presented in my thesis amplified Baden-Powell's official principles in their local actions. We can see this with the reproduction of nationalist and imperial ephemera in their Scouting games, productions, and public displays and parades. Likewise, the content they reproduced in their community magazines and personal journals reflected not only the image they wished to reinforce in their troops, but also how they wished to be perceived by their communities at large. As chapter five has shown, patriotic and military symbols and productions were used by many Scouts because linking themselves with the military and as national servants is the image they wished to show the outside world. These boys' active involvement in the Movement amplified broader Scouting and Edwardian trends of patriotism, civic responsibility, and moral education.

While boys worked at communal efforts in their local areas, they laboured under the assumption that the nation and Empire at large would benefit from their service. Coast watching, police assistance, and guarding rail stations demonstrated a Movement-wide effort to link Scouting with national defence. The boys' participation and organisation of such labours highlights their commitment to their communities and country, while the tone of their records suggest that many viewed their role in national defence as crucial for the well-being of Britain and their communities. These boys took Scouting and its operations seriously. Furthermore, that these Scouts recorded and recounted their efforts within a textual



framework the highlighted national devotion and patriotic expression reinforces the link between their Scouting experience and the broader culture of Edwardian Britain.

The methodological approach that I used in this thesis can be applied to many aspects of historical research. By using individual testimonies from Edwardian Scouts as the main focus and source-set of my thesis, I have demonstrated how youth developed the Movement within the guidelines of their previously held beliefs and principles, and the ways in which they chose to adapt, incorporate, and appropriate. By using a 'history from below' approach, this thesis has also pointed out discrepancies between official narratives and leaders, and with those who experienced the Movement first-hand. This thesis is the first to apply this approach to Scouting in a way that centres its conclusions on the boys' experience and understanding of wider Scouting and social issues. Furthermore, I have shown the ways in which official ideas and trajectories were enacted, adapted, and amplified by individuals at the ground level. Scholarship concerning movements, imperial and national culture, and youth needs to incorporate the records of those involved at the lower levels in order to best gauge the fuller lived experience and historical outcomes. Likewise, as movements exist and spread through a dissemination of ideas, it is crucial that we link together as many avenues and aspects of a movement as possible. This thesis has demonstrated how recovering the voices of enthusiastic members and local leaders allows us better access to the ways in which people incorporated imperial culture, patriotism, and socio-political ideologies into their everyday lives.

This work is important not only in shedding new light on the relationship between Scouting and the communities in which it first emerged, but it also has relevance to wider questions about how Scouting spread beyond Britain that have not been addressed in this thesis. While the Scouting Movement spread rapidly before the First World War, its influence did not stop in Britain. Within the first decade of its existence, Scouting had

become an international institution.<sup>553</sup> Scouting's global reach, as Timothy Parsons observes, was largely because its central principles were easily "adaptable to support the established political order" in most nations of the world.<sup>554</sup> Using personal records and testimonies from Scouts themselves can allow us to draw parallels with the Movement's development in Britain and in the colonies and other nations. The manner in which Scouting developed at the local level, through youth agency, demonstrates how and in what ways individuals shape and use movements to fit their own needs. The ideas surrounding Scouting not only moved through peoples' heads and were shared through texts and communication networks, they, as I have argued throughout my thesis, existed in society long before the Scouting Movement. Baden-Powell's scheme allowed boys a platform to express ideas to which they would have already been exposed. Using the approach I have used in this thesis will open up new research avenues and possibilities for exploring the ways in which youth understood their position in a movement and within the wider social, political, and culture world.

There is still work to be written on the Scouting Movement's role and effect on twentieth century societies throughout the world. For example, I have noted that Scouting used stories and tales of deeds performed by the great men of British history to instill patriotism and duty in youth. While scoutmasters in Britain were disseminating the meaning of chivalry to their young audience, Scouting authority in Japan taught their Scouts about bushido. In a 1920 correspondence, a British man living and studying in Japan, named Captain K. S. Morgan, wrote to an associate in the British embassy about a Japanese Boy Scout rally. He stated that while returning home from a trip in Shizuoka, he "found [himself] in the midst of a Boy Scout rally" in the city of Namazu, south of Tokyo.<sup>555</sup> Morgan recalled that around 5,000 boys were in attendance and that the rally was presided over by Major

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<sup>553</sup> Boehmer, "Introduction," *Scouting for Boys: Original 1908 Edition*, p. xvii.

<sup>554</sup> Parson, *Race, Resistance, and the Boy Scout Movement*, p. 7.

<sup>555</sup> K. S. Morgan, "Letter," British National Archives, WO 106/5667.

General Watanabe.<sup>556</sup> While the parallels in presentation are stark between this Namazu rally and the Leicestershire rally hosted by Lord Kitchener I showed in the introduction, what is of central importance were the activities in which the Scouts engaged. Captain Morgan recalled that the Scouts celebrated and recreated scenes from the “47 Ronin,” a famous historical event that these leaders incorporated into their activities to encourage duty and responsibility in their Scouts.<sup>557</sup> The “47 Ronin” is an eighteenth-century event, that has been retold in plays, songs, and films throughout the past centuries, about a group of samurai who avenged the unjust death of their feudal lord. The story reflects ideas of self-sacrifice, honour, and duty that were also embodied in the central ethos of the Scouting Movement.

While British Scouts recreated scenes from Trafalgar, the Light Brigade, or the Anglo-Zulu Wars, Scouts in other parts of the world incorporated their own national events and mythical histories in their Scouting experience. Likewise, the juxtaposition between these two photographs, one depicting a group of British Scouts in military-style uniform posed outside of London Tower and the other of Japanese Scouts gathered around Major General Watanabe, serves as a representation of how Scouting’s central image was easily transmuted around the world. As the photograph of the British Scouts depicted in military dress was taken just before tens-of-thousands of Scouts shipped off to wage war in 1914, the glorification of the “47 Ronin” in the Japanese boys’ Scouting experience is all the more evocative given the adaptation of bushido into Japanese imperial and military culture in the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>558</sup> The Movement’s core philosophy and structure

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<sup>556</sup> Ibid.

<sup>557</sup> Ibid.

<sup>558</sup> See Colin Holmes and A. H. Ion, “Bushido and the Samurai: Images in British Public Opinion, 1894-1914,” *Modern Asian Studies*, 14.2 (1908), pp. 309-329; Karl F. Friday, “Bushido or Bull? A Medieval Historian's Perspective on the Imperial Army and the Japanese Warrior Tradition,” *The History Teacher*, 27.3 (1994), pp. 339-349; and Roger H. Brown, “Yasuoka Masahiro’s ‘New Discourse on Bushido Philosophy’: Cultivating Samurai Spirit and Men of Character for Imperial Japan,” *Social Science Japan Journal*, 16.1 (2012), pp. 107-129.

provided an easily adaptable framework through which people around the world could express civic duty, patriotism, and national service.



**Figure 6.1. Scouts and Soldiers at the Tower of London, 1914.**  
*Edgar Morton Photo Album, Scout Association Archives, TC/18.*



Movement onto the boys. However, as this thesis as shown, only by incorporating the experience and testimony of those who developed, participated, and reflected the Movement, will we have a more complete picture of what the world's largest youth movement represented on the social, political, and international scale. By comparing this example of Japanese Scouting and how boys participated in nationalistic rituals and activities, to the ways in which British youth engaged with Scouting, we can see how uncovering the voices those most involved in the lower, membership levels has important implications for how we understand the spread of Scouting, and indeed other youth movements, outside of Britain.

While histories of the Boy Scouts have focused predominately on Scouting's ideological framework and its charismatic founder, it was the boys at the local levels who originated and shaped the Movement to fit their own needs. This thesis has placed the boys' representations of Scouting, their recordings of the Movement and wider society, and their interpretation of broader texts and ideas into the conversation about Scouting and Edwardian culture. While examining 'history from below' is not uncommon or new, it is imperative that historians reflect the opinions of the individuals at the bottom level as much as possible. The sources and records that I presented in my thesis came from self-selecting voices of the Movement. These were the boys who were most receptive to Scouting's principles and who amplified its message in their community-based efforts. Local leaders and enthusiastic members are the engine of social and political movements. It is their experience and interpretations that shaped the Scouting Movement and their voices that need to be at the forefront.

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